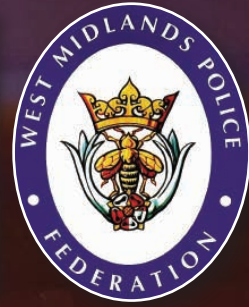


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West Midlands Police Federation

October/November 2024



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- see Pages 18 to 20

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WELCOME

Welcome to the October/November 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.

Cover photo: Family members of fallen officers lit candles of remembrance.
Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography.

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Federation is produced by XPR Communications Ltd on behalf of West Midlands Police Federation.

The articles published do not necessarily reflect the views of the Branch Council. The editor reserves the right to reject or edit any material submitted.

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Why should police officers be denied access to collective bargaining?



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

Police officers hold a unique place in society. They put their lives on the line as they seek to serve and protect the public.

Heading towards danger as others are running away, all too often they pay the ultimate price for their bravery, a fact highlighted by the annual National Police Memorial Day which I attended on Sunday 29 September.

Police officers are part of a service that never says no, often filling in the gaps left by other services and agencies and picking up the pieces when there are failings within other sectors.

While overstretched trying to meet increased demand with reduced resources, police officers are never really off-duty. In fact,

they can find themselves facing conduct proceedings if they fail to intervene if they witness a crime or disorder while they are away from work.

Yet this unique status doesn't ensure they are treated favourably in terms of their pay or their pay review processes.

In fact, you could almost say the opposite is true.

At the same time as the new Government gave junior doctors a 22 per cent pay rise over two years, it awarded police officers – whose pay had been suppressed during the austerity years – an uplift of just 4.75 per cent.

Perhaps I should just remind everyone that the junior doctors had been taking strike action for around 15 months.

While not wishing to pitch one group of workers against another nor question whether the doctors' pay increase was warranted and justified, it does make you wonder if police officers would have received a better pay award if they too had the right to strike, or indeed take any industrial action.

The Federation is campaigning for the abolition of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) – the current system for determining our pay – and the introduction of collective bargaining as a minimum, following a nationwide poll of its membership.

The Government says it has no plans to

change the current pay review process.

But why is this the case? Why is collective bargaining in place for other workers, but not for us?

How can the Government justify its stance, and its apparent hypocrisy, particularly given that this seems to go against its own Green Paper on the issue which states:

'When workers are empowered to act as a collective, they are able to secure better pay and conditions.'

When acting alone, workers are often denied their fair share – but when backed by the collective power of their colleagues and trade unions, they can better secure their share of the wealth they helped to create. The Labour movement's historic achievements have come through giving people power and a voice at work by means of collective action and collective representation.

Labour believes strong collective bargaining rights and institutions at all levels are key to tackling the problems of insecurity, inequality, discrimination, enforcement, low pay, and other issues identified in this Green Paper.

Collective bargaining is still the defining feature of industrial relations in some of the most successful economies in Europe, with many having collective bargaining agreements covering well over three quarters of their workforce.'

“ POLICE OFFICERS ARE PART OF A SERVICE THAT NEVER SAYS NO, OFTEN FILLING IN THE GAPS LEFT BY OTHER SERVICES AND AGENCIES AND PICKING UP THE PIECES WHEN THERE ARE FAILINGS WITHIN OTHER SECTORS.

Unless the Government revisits its decision on PRRB, I fear we are going to see officers become more and more demoralised and disenfranchised which could have disastrous effects on a police service already struggling to maintain officer numbers and hold on to experienced officers.

“ **WHILE OVERSTRETCHED TRYING TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND WITH REDUCE RESOURCES, POLICE OFFICERS ARE NEVER REALLY OFF-DUTY. IN FACT, THEY CAN FIND THEMSELVES FACING CONDUCT PROCEEDINGS IF THEY FAIL TO INTERVENE IF THEY WITNESS A CRIME OR DISORDER WHILE THEY ARE AWAY FROM WORK.**

We want to discuss our concerns with our local MPs, but so far we have found the majority have little interest in policing, or certainly finding out more about those responsible for policing their communities. We invited all our new MPs to a drop-in at our offices, but were forced to cancel this due to a lack of interest.

Meanwhile we are also challenging the unjust charging of interest on sums 'owed' by officers rolled back into the 1987 pension scheme during the so-called remedy period. We believe this is deeply unjust, particularly when those affected by this interest charge were those actually wronged in the pension reform, leading to the remedy being put in place.

We will keep you updated on progress with both pay and pensions, but I would just like to end on a more positive note with the news that the Force has now come out of its 'engage' status with His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

This is, of course, good news and comes off the back of the mighty efforts of the rank and file and the heavy workloads of our detectives.

Free prostate cancer screening for members: register today

West Midlands Police officers can register for a free prostate cancer screening following a push from a Federation member.

The Force has agreed for a number of PSA tests to be made available to officers to check for prostate conditions.

The PSA testing event will be held at Force headquarters at Lloyd House in Birmingham on Monday 18 November, from 10am to 4pm.

Spaces are limited, so members are being asked to register beforehand.

Details on how to register are on the Force intranet or you can contact the Federation office for more information.

To be eligible for a PSA test, officers and staff must be:

- **Men with a prostate, including transgender women and non-binary people**
- **Anyone who will be 40 by Monday 18 November (if you are 39 now, you are eligible to book).**

The PSA event follows [a request from Sergeant Liam Hemmings](#) that tests be made available after his dad, Junia, and the husband of one of his team members were both diagnosed with prostate cancer within a short period of time.

Liam contacted the Federation for support and the Federation approached the Force, with Deputy Chief Constable Scott Green and Pete Gillett, director of commercial services, throwing their support behind the testing programme.

Free flu jab vouchers for West Midlands Police

Members of West Midlands Police Federation are being reminded that they are entitled to a flu jab voucher.

Thanks to an initiative launched by the Force, officers and staff can protect themselves against the flu this autumn and winter.

There is a limited number of vouchers available, so members are advised to act quickly if they want to get their hands on one. Each voucher can be exchanged for a flu vaccine at a local pharmacy.

The vouchers are available to anyone, however, those who are usually not eligible for a flu vaccine are preferred. People who

tend to be offered a flu vaccine on the NHS include those who:

- **Are 65 or older**
- **Have certain long-term health conditions**
- **Are pregnant**
- **Are the main carer for an older or disabled person**
- **Receive a carer's allowance**
- **Live with someone who has a weakened immune system.**

If you are not eligible for a flu vaccine on the NHS and would like to claim your voucher via West Midlands Police, then visit the Health and Wellbeing portal on the intranet.

Pay and morale survey open: 'It's vital that you have a say'

Survey is conducted each year by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), with all members urged to take part.

The results of this year's national Police Federation pay and morale survey will provide invaluable evidence to support its campaign for fairer police pay, says West Midlands Police Federation branch chair Rich Cooke.

He said the more members who complete the survey, the stronger the impact would be in campaigning for improved pay and an independent pay review system.

"The annual pay and morale survey is now open and I'd encourage as many members as possible to take part," said Rich.

"I understand there may be a certain level of survey fatigue among members, but this research does provide helpful evidence for us to use in our campaigning on your behalf for better pay and conditions.

"We've already received a mandate to pursue a fair and binding pay mechanism, and with a new Government in place it gives us the chance to take a fresh view on the issues that matter most to members.

"So, it's vital that we get the views of as many members as possible, that you make your voice heard and you provide us with a comprehensive insight into the realities of policing that we can share with decision-makers.

"And the more members who take part, the louder our voice will be."

“IT'S VITAL THAT WE GET THE VIEWS OF AS MANY MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE, THAT YOU MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD AND YOU PROVIDE US WITH A COMPREHENSIVE INSIGHT INTO THE REALITIES OF POLICING THAT WE CAN SHARE WITH DECISION-MAKERS. AND THE MORE MEMBERS WHO TAKE PART, THE LOUDER OUR VOICE WILL BE.



The survey is now open and closes on Monday 28 October.

As well as covering pay and morale, it looks at mental health, wellbeing, demand, annual leave, rest days and professional development.

It includes three additional topical questions:

- **What unique aspects of policing should be considered when police pay is being reviewed?**
- **Given the recent unrest across the UK, how safe and supported did you feel while on duty?**
- **Does social media have an impact on the way you are able to perform your role?**

[Last year's West Midlands Police Federation pay and morale survey](#) found that 85 per cent of respondents from the Force said were 'dissatisfied or 'very dissatisfied' with their overall remuneration, including basic pay and allowances.

In addition, 89 per cent of respondents felt they were worse off financially than they were five years earlier, with 20 per cent reporting that they 'never' or 'almost never' had enough money to cover all their essentials.

It also found that 88 per cent of members felt morale in the Force was low or very low and 58 per cent felt their personal morale was low or very low.

The main reasons impacting morale were how the police are treated by the Government (97 per cent), how the police are treated by the public (88 per cent) and pay and benefits (85 per cent).

The pay and morale survey is conducted by PFEW's in-house research department.

You should have received an email containing a link to the survey. If you have any issues or have not received the link, please [email the Federation office](#).

Nominate brave officers for annual Federation awards ceremony

Officers from across the Force are being urged to consider nominating colleagues for the West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards.

The Federation first held its own bravery awards night in January this year, and plans are now underway for the 2025 event.

"The inaugural awards night was a resounding success and served to recognise the incredible bravery shown by West Midlands Police officers day in, day out, as they go about their duties serving and protecting our communities," says Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"The police service is going through some of the most difficult times I can remember during my service and this makes it even more important that we highlight the great work officers do.

"No one joins the police service to win awards, they join out of a commitment to serving the public, to fighting crime, to keeping the peace and to protecting the public.

"But, all too often, while carrying out these roles, they instinctively put their lives on the line, putting themselves in danger to help people. We need to recognise this, and our bravery awards help us do that.

"If you know a colleague who has carried out an outstanding act of bravery, please consider putting them forward for the awards."

Rich added: "We are delighted to have Slater and Gordon Lawyers back as the headline sponsor for the awards ceremony. This sponsorship, along with the support of other business partnerships, allows us to host this gala celebration of our officers' bravery."

Awards will be given in seven categories based on the geographical areas of the Force: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

The Sam Hughes Inspiration in Policing Award, in memory of former Federation branch deputy chair Sam who died in 2023, will also be presented during the awards evening. The award is proudly sponsored by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner's Office.

One of the category winners will then be



Last year's overall winner Glenn Brabham and his wife Becca.

chosen as the overall winner and will be presented with the PC David Green Shield as well as going forward as the West Midlands Police Federation nomination for the national Police Bravery Awards which will be held in London in July next year.

The shield is named in honour of 20-year-old David, who was stabbed to death by a mob in Birmingham city centre in July 1975. In David's 15-month career, he was commended three times for his bravery.

The 2024 West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards winner was PC Glenn Brabham who saved the lives of two elderly women who were trapped under a car after

being accidentally run over in a car park.

He attended the national Police Bravery Awards in London this year, joining other nominees at a Downing Street afternoon reception hosted by Home Secretary Yvette Cooper before the evening awards ceremony.

All supervisors within the Force have been sent a nomination form for the awards and requested to circulate to their Constables (Force systems do not allow us to email globally), but if you do not have access to the form, please [email the Federation office](#) so that it can be sent directly to you.

All nominations must be submitted by Friday 18 October 2024.





MPs urged to engage with Federation

Local MPs are being urged to show their commitment to law and order, and improving policing services by engaging with West Midlands Police Federation.

Federation officials had planned to host a drop-in at their Birmingham office for all the region's 24 MPs in early September, but were forced to cancel after only five MPs replied to an invitation to attend.

"We really want to engage with our new MPs and have now emailed each of them three times, twice to invite them to the drop-in, and a third time to explain that we had cancelled the drop-in basically due to a lack of interest," says Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"We know members of the public are concerned about crime, about the safety of their communities and about the policing service they receive but we are starting to question if these are issues of interest to our newly-elected MPs.

"Often, in the run-up to an election, we hear candidates talking about policing and about law and order, but do our MPs actually see policing as a priority?"

"Having cancelled the drop-in, we are now hoping MPs will respond to our requests for a meeting so that we can discuss the challenges our officers are facing.

"West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the country and, as a Federation, we represent the majority of officers policing this region – the constables, sergeants, inspectors, chief inspectors and, for the last couple of years, members of the

Special Constabulary too.

"These are the people on the frontline, day in, day out, serving and protecting their communities, fighting crime, keeping order and protecting the vulnerable. I would say they are the experts on policing and MPs should be interested in hearing their views.

"On behalf of our members, we really can give MPs an accurate picture of the state of policing right now, and we can also discuss our ideas of how improvements could be made. We would, of course, be interested to hear MPs' ideas too."

The Federation has held a constructive one-to-one with Dr Neil Shastri Hughes, the Conservative MP for Solihull West and Shirley, and is in the process of setting up meetings with the four other MPs to have responded, including Birmingham Ladywood Labour MP Shabana Mahmood who is the Lord Chancellor and justice minister.

It has offered to meet with MPs in London, in their constituency offices or at the Federation office in Coventry Road, Shirley.

"We are keen to engage with MPs and, as such, we will meet with them where ever it suits them best," says Tim, "It is interesting that when the Government found itself challenged by the civil unrest, the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and other MPs

stated their unwavering support for policing and yet our experience is that many do not have the common courtesy to respond to our emails.

"There are so many issues we want to discuss with them – police pay, the pay review mechanism, officer morale and wellbeing, and knife crime, to name just a few.

"These are all issues affecting police forces nationwide but here in the West Midlands we have the additional pressure of coping with the fact that we have £28 million less funding when compared with Greater Manchester Police, and yet we have 150,000 extra members of the public to police.

"That is further exacerbated by the Force being placed in special measures by the inspectorate and only just coming out of 'engaged' status.

"We are aware MPs have met with the Force executive but we want them to get the balance of opinion from rank and file officers, and we provide a unified voice for those who are on the frontline of policing.

"We would urge our MPs to contact us so that we can arrange a meeting, get to know more about each other and work together to improve policing for the benefit of the Force, for police officers and, above all, for the communities we all serve."

- Two more MPs have contacted the branch since this news release was published.

“ THERE ARE SO MANY ISSUES WE WANT TO DISCUSS WITH THEM – POLICE PAY, THE PAY REVIEW MECHANISM, OFFICER MORALE AND WELLBEING, AND KNIFE CRIME, TO NAME JUST A FEW.

Branch secretary in productive meeting with MPs

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers was part of a delegation of Federation officials to meet with MPs at the Labour and Conservative Party Conferences.

At the Labour Conference, which was held in Liverpool last week, Tim spoke to two new MPs, former PC Jonathon Hinder, who represents the Pendle and Clitheroe constituency in Lancashire, and Sarah Edwards, MP for Tamworth, Staffordshire.

"I was keen to raise a number of key issues with those I spoke to at the conferences and to gain support from MPs to take these forward," explained Tim.

"One of the subjects we discussed concerned the case of firearms officer WA80. We are calling on the Home Secretary to legislate to overturn the ruling in the case.

"We see far too many officers dragged through conduct processes and criminal investigations for simply doing the job they have been trained to do in terms of serving and protecting their communities.

"Firearms officers, for example, have to make split-second decisions, assessing the threat and risk to them and the public, before pulling the trigger but then find that their actions are analysed, frame by frame, by people who it would sometimes seem just want to catch them out, and apply judgments of their actions with the benefit of hindsight."

Tim said while police officers were pleased the Home Secretary spoke out in support of officers during the unrest over the summer, that support is not evident in the Government's failure to legislate to overturn the WA80 ruling.

"We need more than words," explained Tim, "The WA80 case has significant ramifications not just for firearms officers but for any officer who has to use force while upholding the law and keeping order.

"If the WA80 ruling is not overturned the Federation will need to universally explain the

potential jeopardy officers face because of it remaining in place."

Both Jonathon Hinder and Sarah Edwards have agreed to look into this issue and support the Federation as it seeks a remedy.

They have also committed to find out more about a potential amendment to the legislation in relation to police drivers.

"The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 gave officers better protection in law when they act in line with their prescribed training. The legislation is working, and more officers are now able to confidently drive as trained so they can keep the public safe," Tim explained.

"But, while there is some flex within the authorised professional practice (APP), there is no legal framework to allow for officers to act instinctively to a situation that unfolds in front of them. This puts them in an impossible situation and a balance needs to be struck here which I pointed out as part of the public consultation on the new legislation in 2018.

"There is currently a policy vacuum, and this has to be resolved. The exemptions within the new law should have caveats, which would mean new tactics would be sanctioned through the National Police Chiefs' Council groups. While this is resolved, we need officers to be supported."

Tim cites as an example electric bike tactics which are being developed but are currently not part of prescribed training which may leave officers vulnerable. He says the exemption should cover this.

Tim also met with Conservative MPs at their party conference in Birmingham this week, with Lincoln Jopp, MP for Spelthorne, Surrey, and Andrew Snowden, MP for Fylde in Lancashire, also agreeing to find out more about the WA80 case and the legal framework needed to better protect police drivers.

All four MPs voiced support for the Federation's campaign for industrial

rights for police officers and also for reform of the police pay review mechanism.

"I raised the question as to how the Government could rationalise the 22 per cent pay uplift for junior doctors at the same time as giving police officers 5 per cent – and the impression I got, quite simply, was that the doctors can strike," said Tim.

"There seemed to be an agreement from the MPs that I spoke to – particularly Sarah since she was a union organiser before becoming an MP – that police officers should at least have the ability to collectively bargain. They are supportive of our desire to have an appropriate mechanism by which we can negotiate pay."

Tim also tackled the issue of police funding when talking to the MPs.

"We need politicians to realise that increased funding and flexibility are needed if we are to deliver the policing services our communities need," says Tim,

"The fact that chief officers aren't being honest about their ability to deliver and what is needed is proving problematic. Some are showing false positives which only adds to the problems being faced on the frontline and you only have to look at the inspectorate to see this is happening and is to the detriment of the public we serve."

“ WE NEED POLITICIANS TO REALISE THAT INCREASED FUNDING AND FLEXIBILITY ARE NEEDED IF WE ARE TO DELIVER THE POLICING SERVICES OUR COMMUNITIES NEED. ”



Spitting attacks on officers on the rise

Federation officials draw attention to the rising number of cases of officers being spat at while carrying out their duties, with branch chair Rich Cooke talking about his own experience of being contaminated by blood.

More police officers than ever are being spat at while carrying out their duties, according to the deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

And Jase Dooley has spoken out about the 'horrendous' impact that spitting and needle attacks have on members.

"It's disgusting," he said, "When you speak to our members many say they'd rather be punched or rather have a physical injury than being spat in the face.

"There are all sorts of illnesses and diseases that can be passed to our members – the risk is horrendous.

"It's the same when officers are bitten and their skin is broken. I've never known the number of officers being spat at to be so high."

Jase said such attacks can be upsetting and worrying for the officer.

"They have to go to hospital," he said, "They undergo tests, maybe vaccinations, and can be on medication for six months and they won't know until after six months if they have

got anything.

"The worry is horrendous. It's not just work, it affects their personal and private life, and relationships with partners."

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has spoken about his own experience of being contaminated with blood while making an arrest after [posting on X](#), formerly known as Twitter, about an officer injured by a needle.

Rich said: "There was a bloke pouring with blood, and I got blood in my mouth. You go through a few months of a very difficult personal life.

"They are testing for HIV, you have to be tested for three months. It's a difficult period where you're worried if you have this or that.

It's only a small chance but it's very disruptive.

"The drugs they give you, in my case they knocked me out a bit. It can be a lonely place."

Jase said with the rise in such attacks on police officers, members should consider using spit guards to protect themselves if they fear they are going to be spat at.

He said the use of spit guards, as in all personal safety tactical decisions, was controlled by the national decision model (NDM) and the officer's own justification for their actions.

Jase said: "When an officer makes a split-second decision to put a spit guard on someone it's because they think they're going to be spat at, or they have blood in their mouth, and blood is being spat everywhere when they're talking, or they have previous for spitting on officers.

"Our members are dealing with this on a daily basis and we need to protect them.

"I'd say to them have the confidence that if you're using spit guards or using force and you are completely justified in your actions we will support them, we will fight their cause."

“IT'S DISGUSTING. WHEN YOU SPEAK TO OUR MEMBERS MANY SAY THEY'D RATHER BE PUNCHED OR RATHER HAVE A PHYSICAL INJURY THAN BEING SPAT IN THE FACE.

Custody concerns: Federation refers Force to HSE

Concerns around custody blocks regularly being managed by a single sergeant have led West Midlands Police Federation to refer the Force to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Branch health and safety lead Patrick McBrearty said the Federation issued an improvement notice after the Force 'failed to show sufficient improvement in the working conditions within custody'.

"This has become a health and safety issue," said Patrick, "We feel that the Force is putting custody sergeants at risk due to the poor working environment in custody."

Patrick joined the branch as full-time health and safety lead in October. Since then, he says he has received 'multiple emails' and eSafety reports from custody sergeants voicing their concerns and raising issues about being single-crewed.

"We were then told that as many as 44 new sergeants would be joining in March this year and, while that happened, the thing was that they needed to be mentored and trained. Not only is the number of mentors spread thin, but this also meant that there was an even greater demand on those mentoring," continued Patrick.

He says that he has known single sergeants to oversee very large numbers of prisoners, with an expectation to take more, which, in his opinion, 'is totally unacceptable'.

As it stands, there are two main custody superblocks, one at Oldbury and the other in Perry Barry, North Birmingham. In addition, there are four 'satellite' custody suites located around the region.

Patrick explained that working alongside a custody sergeant is usually two detention escort officers. However, only the trained custody sergeant can authorise the detention of a prisoner.

"Our custody sergeants are being put in vulnerable situations," added Patrick.

His concerns come after reports highlighted a large number of assaults on custody sergeants and other staff that have



taken place in custody blocks over the past six months with many more incidents, accidents and near-miss reports included too.

Patrick added: "For me, there are a couple of ways things to make improvements: recruiting and retaining staff, as well as raising the number of custody sergeants currently trained so that there are more people to call on if the support is required."

Patrick has previously called for all satellite custody blocks in the West Midlands to have two sergeants working a shift together rather than one - which he says 'sadly appears is a common recurrence' - or alternatively, to build a more resilient model whereby the Force has more locally trained sergeants available to assist, when necessary, as was the case pre-austerity.

He explained: "In late May, the Federation met with senior managers to discuss their concerns. Due to the fact single crewing at satellite stations appeared to be a common and weekly occurrence, a Police Federation

improvement notice was served, giving the Force three weeks to make significant positive changes.

"One senior manager kept referring to a new policing model that had been introduced in April, claiming that it had made working conditions safer for officers."

But with no significant improvements made following their meeting, Patrick said the Federation had no choice but to refer the Force to the Health and Safety Executive. The referral was made on 14 June.

"This is not only just a staffing issue," Patrick added. "This is a staffing issue which has now resulted in a health and safety issue."

Patrick explained that the Health and Safety Executive is a Government body. Should it find the Force is negligent and breaching health and safety, then it could be prosecuted.

"If the Force is found to be negligent, a thorough investigation will take place," said Patrick.

Since the issuing of the improvement notice, significant efforts have been made, and continue to be made by the Force, to make things better and safer for staff and people in custody. Federation representatives are working with the Force to remedy these issues.

“ THIS HAS BECOME A HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE. WE FEEL THAT THE FORCE IS PUTTING CUSTODY SERGEANTS AT RISK DUE TO THE POOR WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN CUSTODY. ”

Returning to work after treatment for breast cancer West Midlands Police Federation equality lead Julie Fleming has now had a chance to reflect on the journey she has been on.

We asked Julie, who has 22 years' service with the Force, if she was happy to talk about her experience and she found herself writing a very personal, and moving, testimony about finding a lump, seeking medical advice, undergoing treatment and finally her recovery.

Admitting it was therapeutic, we have left Julie's story in her own words, but one of her comments within her story is something that others who have had a similar diagnosis will probably relate to:

"Wow - this wasn't meant to happen to me."

She also has a message for anyone who faces cancer treatment in the future: "It's important people realise that the journey is long and hard. It's not about being brave. It's just about getting through it. You have to carry on. You owe it to yourself and those you love."

Julie says her own policing career was born out of a desire to help the law-abiding majority and bring offenders to justice.

"I just wanted to be part of that," she explains.

That commitment to helping others, led her to become a workplace Federation representative around six years ago and she took on the full-time equality role - which she shares with Jon Nott - in 2020.

"I want to help ensure the workplace is a safe, supportive and fair environment," she says.

Julie's story

Mother's Day 2023 I finally had a meltdown and admitted I'd found a lump. I'd felt it for weeks, maybe months, but tried to dismiss it.

It was obviously playing on my mind as I started crying over the fact my nine-month-old wouldn't sit still for a photo!

What followed was a whirlwind.

GP first - who agreed she could also feel the lump which was a relief that it wasn't just me, but also an obvious worry. She referred me and, within a month, I arrived at the hospital for a mammogram.

My partner's father was also very ill at the time and, thinking I wouldn't be told anything there and then, I advised her she was OK to continue with her day. I thought it would be a quick scan, go home to wait for a letter. But it wasn't. I went from an examination, where the



'Wow - this wasn't supposed to happen to me'

consultant drew a cross on me indicating she could also feel the lump, to a mammogram, then a scan and then a biopsy.

I watched the screen and could see a black shape and remembered thinking this must be a cyst. As I got dressed the consultant said the results would be around three weeks.

I asked if she could tell me anything to which she replied: "Do you want to know?" Obviously, yes, I now need to know!

She then said: "Put it this way, there's something there, if it comes back as benign then I'll be sending it back. You will need an operation and radiotherapy; it looks operable to me."

I recall having a few tears and then walking out thinking: 'Wow, this wasn't supposed to happen to me'.

Then followed the reveal to my family, friends and colleagues. This was interesting.

Some people cried, some swore, and some were distant.

Within a few weeks, in May 2023, I was in for surgery. I didn't quite expect the size of the scar. They removed a lump 2.8 cm in diameter, along with some surrounding tissue. They also took two lymph nodes to check if it had spread.

The recovery was sore. The bruising was nasty, and the scars kept weeping in one area. Antibiotics and other tablets were my friend. Sleep was almost impossible. I was to expect radiotherapy after a recovery period of around a month.

But then the shock, the cancer had spread to my lymph nodes, and I needed a 'full clearance' so, in June, around a month after my first operation, I was in for a second.

I emerged with a drain attached to me which took away excess fluid from the area my

lymph nodes previously were, and some extra scars. I had the drain for about a week, carrying it around in a shoulder bag the hospital had provided.

I felt battered. I felt old and I felt really sorry for myself at this point! Soon after I had a PICC line fitted. This is a catheter with a long tube threaded into the inner upper arm that goes all the way to a large vein by the heart.

The idea is for this to be used to take blood, give chemotherapy and other drugs, and to avoid finding a suitable vein to administer and the damage this can cause when done multiple times.

This was painful from the beginning, perhaps even more than the surgeries. I attended hospital shortly after as the pain was excruciating. They checked it and, as they could take blood, said it was in OK and perhaps they had bruised me putting it in.

“MY HAIR FALLS OUT AFTER ABOUT TWO WEEKS WHICH, ALTHOUGH I KNOW IS PRETTY INEVITABLE, IS STILL A SHOCK. THE WORST BIT FOR ME WAS LOSING MY EYEBROWS AND EYELASHES. I JUST LOOKED ODD.

All was revealed when it was removed post-chemo and it took three nurses who ended up having to cut and split it in half to remove as it was in so deep. I have a little scar as a reminder for this stage.

Late July 2023 and chemo begins. Eight sessions, three weeks apart. Two different types of chemo, each bringing an array of delightful side effects which I won't go into. I'm on tablets galore and having to self-inject for seven days after each chemo which I can't bear to do and rely on my rock to administer.

My hair falls out after about two weeks which, although I know is pretty inevitable, is still a shock. The worst bit for me was losing my eyebrows and eyelashes. I just looked odd.

My energy levels are at rock bottom. I can't imagine how difficult this is for Emma, my partner, my rock, having not only me but our little one and two dogs to contend with. I tried to not be a burden as much as possible but sometimes I just can't move or function.

Despite a few hiccups and a few extra antibiotics, I avoid any serious side effects that require hospitalisation and consider myself lucky to finish chemo on schedule mid-December.

I was then given just over a month off to recover. My hair starts growing back, my energy levels increase slowly, but the side effects continue. I begin tablets which I will



take for 10 years.

My legs throb in the morning and overnight due to toxins and I find myself in menopause with awful hot flushes, sweats and a changeable tolerance to situations. And so, to radiotherapy. A month of being blasted every day. The hospital is 45 mins away also and sometimes the appointment, which only takes about 15 minutes, has run late by over an hour. So, for that month that's all you do. Radiotherapy brings another host of unpleasant side effects.

So here I am now. I've just returned to work on a phased return. Work has been great. I've had contact throughout my 12 months off, but no expectations or pressure on me.

I was supported on full pay throughout via the Reg 28 board and have to thank them for this. Money is the last thing you want to worry about when all this is going on. I continue 'on the up'.

I have some ongoing issues and am attending hospital for this still. I also have six-monthly infusions for my bones. My first mammogram since this all began came back

negative.

My consultant says: "We don't say cancer-free or in remission, what we say is there's no sign of disease, but we aren't looking for it."

I'll take that.

I can't thank the NHS enough. From the GP to the breast care team, surgeons, consultants and radiologists. Amazing individuals.

The kindness from my partner, friends, family, and colleagues and even strangers can be overwhelming and sometimes quite unexpected. It changes you, for the better. I appreciate so much more in my life.

I am scared though. It is scary when the Big C gets you. Before now this was always someone else's story, and I was pretty much fit and healthy.

The clear mammogram gives me hope although I do feel like I'm holding my breath for the next round of 'something'.

I know I'm one of the lucky ones though and I am hoping, as times goes on, I get back to some sort of normality - whatever that is! I think I am getting there.

Private healthcare scheme

A private healthcare scheme which costs just over £16 a month is available to members of West Midlands Police Federation.

Bluline is designed specifically for police officers, police staff and their families and is managed by police officers.

Key features include:

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Know Your Numbers!



With six million people across the UK having undiagnosed high blood pressure, officers were encouraged to take part in the annual Know Your Numbers! Week by taking their blood pressure, and then seeking help and support if their readings were high.

More information about the awareness week, which ran from 2 to 8 September, can be found on the [Blood Pressure UK website](#).

Police Mutual put together a [factsheet](#) with useful information, help and advice to coincide with the campaign.

Learn about the PTC

The Police Treatment Centres (PTC) are holding a virtual information session on 3 October to enable officers to find out more about the help and support it can offer.

[Sign up for the session.](#)

The PTC charity provides two centres – one in Harrogate, the other in Auchterarder – where members of the police family can receive treatment following an illness or injury. There is also online Physiotherapy service.

Almost 4,000 people attend the centres each year with most receiving intensive physiotherapy. Others seek support with stress-related conditions or anxiety and depression as part of the Psychological Wellbeing Programme.

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Driver training: Share your views

The Force's police drivers are being asked to fill out a questionnaire to help the driver training unit (DTU) plan future courses.

The survey is aimed at basic drivers and officers who have attended the DTU for a response driving or initial phase pursuit course.

The DTU is working with Learning and Development to review driver training courses, and also assess how officers are using their training when on duty.

"This is about future proofing the driver training provision and meeting the constantly evolving demand that is created by policing. It

will help address the issues around having suitably qualified drivers and how this may be achieved and resourced," says Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation and national Federation pursuits and driver training lead.

"We want to hear officers' views on their basic, response and initial phase pursuits training so the DTU can meet demand and deliver accordingly, ensuring the correct resources are available so the Force can meet its legal obligations in terms of providing fit and proper policing services.

"We would urge officers to take the time to complete the questionnaire, and to be as



Tim Rogers.

honest and constructive as possible as this will really help ensure the Force builds on its current driver training provision."

The survey is completely anonymous and should only take five minutes to complete.

[Complete the survey.](#)



Concerns new law will not keep 'zombie' knives off the streets

West Midlands Police Federation deputy chair Jase Dooley has voiced his concern that new legislation will not stop the supply of dangerous weapons.

Jase questioned the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (Offensive Weapons) (Amendment, Surrender and Compensation) Order 2024 in removing weapons from the street and reducing crime.

The order, which came into effect on 24 September, introduces a ban on certain types of 'zombie-style' knives and machetes, including definitions of the weapons to be banned.

However, Jase fears that manufacturers will find a way around the legislation with weapons that are not subjected to the ban.

He said: "We all want to see these zombie-style knives off our streets but it's vital that policies and legislation are effective.

"I'm concerned the legislation will still not address the continuing supply and sale of multiple weapons from hunting knives to types of swords and axes, some of which are sold as

collector's items.

"Will the manufacturers and marketers of these weapons design them in a slightly different way that avoids the stipulations in the legislation?"

"It also won't address weapons like swords or other machetes. And then there are cleavers and axes, which are being designed in all sorts of ways.

"Which is why we say we need an outright ban on these weapons, and a plain packaging requirement which bans the marketing of these weapons."

Under a month-long amnesty owners of zombie-style knives and machetes could claim compensation if they surrender the weapons to police before the new legislation

came into effect.

The scheme ran from 26 August.

Jase said: "This scheme allowed owners to lawfully dispose of these weapons before the legislation went live, and anything that can help to get these weapons off our street is to be welcomed.

"However, as we've said on numerous occasions, we need a long-term strategy that focuses on prevention and deterrents.

"So, as well as a ban on their sale and marketing, police officers are supported and feel confident in using their powers, such as stop and search.

"And we need deterrents and certain jail time for repeat offenders, and probable jail time for first-time offenders."

“ I'M CONCERNED THE LEGISLATION WILL STILL NOT ADDRESS THE CONTINUING SUPPLY AND SALE OF MULTIPLE WEAPONS FROM HUNTING KNIVES TO TYPES OF SWORDS AND AXES, SOME OF WHICH ARE SOLD AS COLLECTOR'S ITEMS.

New knife crime policy welcomed

The Force's updated knife crime policy will allow it to take a more concentrated approach to the problem.

That is the view of West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

In welcoming the updated policy, Rich called on the Government to give the Force the resources and the numbers of officers it needed to tackle knife crime.

Rich said: "The policy is a significant step in the right direction, providing clear direction to colleagues, but now what needs to be done is at a higher level than our Force and that's sustained investment in policing in West Midlands.

"We can have the right policies and processes in place but if we haven't got the numbers of skilled, confident officers to implement it then the impact will be limited. Of course, the criminal justice and prison system is also under major stress. These are the underlying fundamentals we need urgently rectified so we can be more effective."

The Force introduced its knife crime policy in November to give officers clear direction on how to effectively deal with the issue.

The juvenile policy has now been updated following consultation with partners, with changes including:

- **Earlier outcome decisions for juvenile knife crime suspects, the vast majority of which while they are safely in police custody with a teachable moment to prevent reoffending instead of waiting subject to further delays through bail.**
- **Exceptionally where there is no option but to bail for further enquiries, this will be for the shortest possible time.**

Rich said: "Our view is that anyone who is carrying weapons like these knives and machetes is a potential killer and needs to be dealt with as such. This reflects the feedback of many colleagues who have seen the devastation caused by knife violence sadly often perpetrated by juveniles.

"We don't think that it's been treated with sufficient severity by decision makers in recent years, particularly with regard to juveniles.

"The new knife crime policy says that offenders who are under 18 and arrested for knife-related offences should have their outcome decision made by the police while they are in custody rather than being bailed for a decision at the YJS Panel.

"We are taking ownership of the problem to prevent crime and address wider safeguarding issues through this approach.

"I'd give our Chief Constable credit for listening to the feedback of rank and file

“OUR VIEW IS THAT ANYONE WHO IS CARRYING WEAPONS LIKE THESE KNIVES AND MACHETES IS A POTENTIAL KILLER AND NEEDS TO BE DEALT WITH AS SUCH. THIS REFLECTS THE FEEDBACK OF MANY COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE SEEN THE DEVASTATION CAUSED BY KNIFE VIOLENCE SADLY OFTEN PERPETRATED BY JUVENILES.

colleagues, driving this forward, working through the complex issues around youth justice and making sure we are arresting more suspects found with deadly weapons with public protection being the first priority.

"With regard to juveniles, we desperately do want them to be supported and rehabilitated in the long run but ultimately that's secondary to the protection of the innocent law abiding public and themselves as young people."

Rich said the Force's knife crime investigations and outcomes were 'going in the right direction'.

But he said the Force was still 700 officers short of its total number of officers back in 2010.

He said the Force needed Government investment in officers and infrastructure to continue to make significant progress on knife-related crime.

"We're still way below where we were in 2010," he explained. "We're the poor relations among UK police forces. We've not seen sufficient dividends from of the 20,000 officer uplift, and still suffer through an outdated funding formula which consistently rewards more affluent areas with better funding."

"Labour when they were in opposition said their policy was to recruit 13,000 neighbourhood officers across England and Wales.

"We are hoping that (Home Secretary) Yvette Cooper's promise of 13,000 neighbourhood officers will translate into that 700 deficit at least disappearing and then adding some on top.

"The Force is now fitter and has the right priorities, but to really push on and start making a difference people will really see and feel, we need the Government to step up and give us a fair settlement in terms of officers and funding."



A touching tribute to sergeant at National Police Memorial Day

Standards are lowered in honour of fallen officers.

Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, was among those who remembered fallen officers at this year's National Police Memorial Day.

Rich, who was joined by Chief Constable Craig Guildford, stood side by side with hundreds of others, including fellow Federation representatives, Force colleagues, religious leaders, politicians and families, at the event on Sunday (29 September).

The service, which this year was held at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall, was extra

poignant for the West Midlands team as Sergeant Paul Frear was remembered.

Paul died in September last year at the age of 45, having been involved in a road accident on his way to work.

Speaking about the day, Rich said: "The National Police Memorial Day is always special and full of mixed emotions. This year was especially touching for the West Midlands family as we remembered one of our own. Paul was not only a colleague of mine but a good friend too - and the service gave us all the

opportunity to honour him.
 "Life is undoubtedly busy, and we don't always get the chance to stop and remember those who are no longer with us. The National Police Memorial Day enables that, and this year was no different. It gives us time to reflect and honour the lives of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

"It also demonstrates to the families of our fallen colleagues that their loved ones will never be forgotten."

The event, which was the 21st of its kind, honoured the lives of more than 5,000 officers who have died while on duty in the past 180 years.

Representing the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) was acting national chair Tiff Lynch.

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

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

The Reverend Matt Hopley, who formerly volunteered at West Midlands Police and is now National Police Chaplain, opened the service.

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

“ THIS YEAR WAS ESPECIALLY TOUCHING FOR THE WEST MIDLANDS FAMILY AS WE REMEMBERED ONE OF OUR OWN. PAUL WAS NOT ONLY A COLLEAGUE OF MINE BUT A GOOD FRIEND TOO - AND THE SERVICE GAVE US ALL THE OPPORTUNITY TO HONOUR HIM.

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

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



Chief Constable Craig Guildford (left) with West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

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

Each year, relatives representing Scotland,

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

This year, lighting the candle for Scotland was Margaret Collins, mother, and Helen Cruddis, sister, of PC Anthony (Tony) Collins, 43 years, Police Service of Scotland, who died

Continued on Page 20



The procession through the streets of Glasgow.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY 2024

on 29 November 2013 when a police helicopter crashed into the roof of the Clutha bar in Glasgow.

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

For Northern Ireland, Jill Davidson, the wife of Detective Superintendent Philip Davidson, 45 years, of Royal Ulster Constabulary GC, who died on 2 June 1994 when the RAF Chinook helicopter crashed on the Mull of Kintyre.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Home Secretary Yvette Cooper signs the book of remembrance.

Photo courtesy of Anderson Photography

National Police Memorial Day 2025 coming to Coventry

Next year's National Police Memorial Day will be taking place at Coventry Cathedral, it has been announced.

The annual memorial day will be in its 22nd year.

"It's an honour to hear that next year's National Police Memorial Day will be taking place on our doorstep," said Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation.

"No doubt, it's a big responsibility, but I am confident that teams across the region will come together to do the service justice.

"Coventry Cathedral is a beautiful setting and will serve as the perfect location for us to remember those who have died in the line of duty.

"I look forward to welcoming colleagues from across the four nations, as well as those from overseas, and of course, the



families of fallen officers, to Coventry in 2025."

Rich is encouraging any survivors of West Midlands Police officers to get in touch ahead of next year's service.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for us to reach out to all the families and loved ones of local officers," he explained.

"The Federation will be actively trying to engage any known survivors over the coming months ahead of next year's event. We would really like to do something special to remember our fallen colleagues from the West Midlands Police family."

National Police Memorial Day is held each year on the Sunday nearest to St Michael's Day, the Patron Saint of Police. Therefore, it will take place on 28 September 2025.

Registration for the event is not yet open. Members are advised to keep an eye on the West Midlands Police Federation website for up-to-date information.

Survivors of West Midlands Police Officers who would like to get in touch are encouraged to contact the Fed office [by email](#).

Fed post is 'very big deal to me' says new workplace rep

New West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative Rhys McDowell details his career history, the experiences that have shaped his character and the aspirations he has for his Federation role.

"I'm 6ft 2, covered in tattoos and always told I frown a lot," says Rhys, conceding that Federation members may not see him as the most approachable person at first glance.

This, however, could not be further from the truth as he says he has lived virtually his whole life with an innate desire to help others.

Growing up in the village of Little Lever, Greater Manchester, Rhys, 32, became a competitive dancer from the age of three and, while he thrived in the dance studio, he was also subjected to bullying in his early childhood.

"I was targeted because I was a boy dancer. In the '90s, it just wasn't seen as normal or appropriate and I was basically outcast by my peers because of it," he adds.

"Because I've grown up in that world, I think I've always been good at seeing people who might not be able to defend themselves or use their voice fully.

"I can relate to how that feels, and witnessing it happen has always had a real emotional effect on me, without me having a choice in the matter."

Rhys' resilience and ability to remain headstrong meant giving up dance was never an option, and he saw his passion through to turning professional when he was a teenager. His performing career continued into his early twenties.

"A lot of people don't realise this, but dancing does have a lot of discipline and regiment to it. It was 12 to 13-hour days," continues Rhys, who admits that while he still enjoyed performing, he 'had eventually had enough of dancing as a job'.

After a brief spell in the Royal Air Force, Rhys moved to Staffordshire and joined the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Police as a firearms officer, facing some of the most dangerous weaponry in the world as he specialised in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) operations for three years.

Unfortunately, this specific role prevented

him from progressing into the Ministry's Crime Command, a network of intelligence-gathering and investigation units.

Becoming a detective was an ambition he developed during his spell in the MoD. His increasing appetite for the role saw him join West Midlands Police in 2021.

"Both my grandads were high-ranking police officers, so maybe it was in my blood that I'd eventually join the Force," Rhys laughs.

"I'm currently a PC on a local CID team based in Walsall, which I have thoroughly enjoyed, and I'm now on the way to becoming a detective constable, which is what I've wanted for a while.

"The main reason I've had the aim of becoming a detective is simply because I enjoy working with people and I want to do that in circumstances where they often need the help of the police the most."

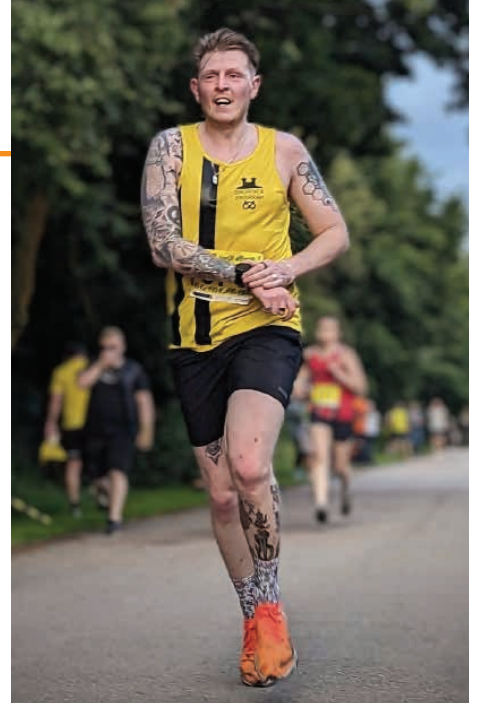
As well as setting his sights on becoming a detective – he has passed the national exam and is completing the remainder of his training – Rhys was encouraged by colleagues to become a Fed rep.

He continues: "I think people recognised straight away that I was someone with a strong set of morals – if I see something I don't believe is right, I will challenge it.

"Even with things that are established and part of the status quo, I'm not afraid to question them. Just because something has always happened, it doesn't necessarily mean it should continue – that isn't a good enough reason for me."

When he finally acted on encouragement from his peers to explore a Federation post, his approach to branch deputy chair Jase Dooley was met with enthusiasm, and he was officially elected as a workplace representative in August.

Outlining his ambitions, Rhys says: "It goes back to that idea of helping the voiceless, or people who may not feel they are in a position to be heard properly. And I think that can happen



in a rank and file structure – people can be scared of upsetting their superiors and sticking out from the rest.

"For years, I've been helping colleagues by helping them with issues they would be dubious about addressing. I'd either find a way for them to feel more comfortable doing this or just speak up on the issue myself. I'm now looking forward to doing this in a more official capacity.

"I feel I'm ready for it."

More specifically, Rhys says he wants to have a strong input on equality, which holds importance to him as a partially deaf person, and health and safety.

He went on to summarise the key principle he will stand by as 'helping the helpers'.

"I'm massively proud to represent the Federation, which gives so much to police officers everywhere. I think we can all be guilty of being so focused on supporting others, we forget that we ourselves need support – it's absolutely crucial," Rhys says.

"So, it's a very big deal to me that I will get to serve the people who serve the country."

He says he is willing to have a conversation with any Federation member who may have questions or concerns they wish to share.

Rhys is a keen runner – he is part of both the West Midlands Police and Stafford Harriers running clubs – and welcomed members to have a chat with him over a jog.

His other interests and hobbies include photography and he runs his own successful company in addition to his Force duties. He also likes to spend time with his chocolate Labrador, Ronnie, and enjoys all things Harry Potter.

The popular book and film franchise make up most of Rhys' collection of tattoos, he revealed – proof that appearances can be deceptive.

"I just want Federation members to feel like they can come to me with anything," he concludes.

"Ultimately, I want everyone to have that ability to come to their job and enjoy it. It's a tough profession, but on the whole, we should still be able to enjoy doing it."

Men's mental health walking group 'breaking down barriers'

A West Midlands Police Federation member who set up a walking group to support men's mental health says if it helps one person it's been a success.

The walking group was set up by PC Dan Phillips, who says it has grown bigger than he ever imagined with more than 1,400 members on its Facebook page.

“WHATEVER WE CAN DO TO BREAKDOWN THAT STIGMA AND GET PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT IT AND GIVE THEM AN OPTION RATHER THAN SEEING ONE WAY OUT, THAT'S OUR GOAL.

Speaking in the run-up to World Suicide Prevention Day, which was on 10 September, he said he hoped the group would help to reduce the stigma around mental health, particularly among men.

Figures from [the Samaritans](#) show that in 2022 there were 5,284 deaths by suicide. The male suicide rate was 16.1 per 100,000, compared to a female suicide rate of 5.3 per 100,000.

Dan said: “Whatever we can do to breakdown that stigma and get people to talk about it and give them an option rather than seeing one way out, that's our goal.

“If we can help one person then the group has been a success. It's breaking down the

barriers, for men in particular, because we don't talk about it.”

The group, Back and Forth – Men's Mental Health, reaches its one-year anniversary in October. It was created as a tribute to Dan's friend and colleague PC Marc Forth, who died by suicide in April 2023.

Initially it was for male officers in West Midlands Police but has attracted walkers from outside the Force, with Dan estimating membership is around 50 per cent police officers and 50 per cent non-police officers.

The group has recently started social events every Friday at Broadstreet Rugby Club in Coventry and the Canal Bar and Lounge in Rugby hosts another social evening on the



Group members at a family fun day.



Promoting the benefits of the group.

second Thursday of each month.

It has recently received a grant from Rugby council to invest in merchandise to sell and an application for charity status is 'well on its way'.

And Dan is looking to put up plaques around West Midlands Police stations with QR codes to direct people to the group and support, should they need it.

"We are going from strength to strength," said Dan. "I am really proud of it. It's busy but it's a rewarding busy because it's something that people need.

"It's grown much bigger than I thought it ever would. When I set it up I didn't know if anyone was going to get involved or turn up.

"The first couple of walks there were a couple of us and now it's gone massive. It's really rewarding."

Back and Forth – Men's Mental Health has received the backing of Chief Constable Craig Guildford, who joined members at the group's family fun day earlier in the summer at **Draycote Water** near Rugby.

Dan explained: "We keep getting family members putting blokes forward and tagging them on Facebook, but blokes don't tend to come because of the social stigma.

"We thought if we put a family fun day on

“ WE ARE GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH. I AM REALLY PROUD OF IT. IT'S BUSY BUT IT'S A REWARDING BUSY BECAUSE IT'S SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE NEED. IT'S GROWN MUCH BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT IT EVER WOULD. WHEN I FIRST SET IT UP I DIDN'T KNOW IF ANYONE WAS GOING TO GET INVOLVED OR TURN UP.



Chief Constable Craig Guildford (left) with founder Dan Phillips (centre) and a group member.

then family members would bring their blokes and they will be a bit more relaxed.

"The Chief came to that and did the full walk around Draycote Water and had an ice cream with us at the end of it, which was great. He has got really on board with it.

"He would like representatives across the Force to take in walks in different areas and to spread it out across the Force."

Dan said he can see that the group is

having a positive impact for people.

"One lad in particular, Liam, came to a walk in October and was withdrawn from everybody. But over the next couple of weeks he came to more walks and started talking more. He has thrown himself into it and the change in him is massive.

"He is now a co-founder, and is arranging things, and when people join the WhatsApp group he is the first to welcome them.

"He is putting back in what he has got out of it, and there are quite a few people like that, which is great."

In support of World Suicide Prevention Day, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) held a free webinar to open conversations about mental health and provide support in policing.

Find out more about the **Back and Forth** group.

Members of the Special Constabulary have been able to sign up as members of the Federation for two years now. In the latest of a series of articles putting our own voluntary officers under the spotlight, we interviewed two members of the Special Constabulary.

Natalia serves the public in two different roles

With two separate roles within West Midlands Police, Natalia Kotowska credits her desire to be part of a large institution with national importance as the motivation behind her above-and-beyond dedication to the Force.

Natalia doubled her policing duties when she became a Special Constable last year having enjoyed a day job as a dispatch officer at West Midlands Police since December 2021.

Before taking on these dual responsibilities, Natalia never had any specific plans of taking on one job in the police, let alone two. In fact, when she began life in the UK after moving to Hertfordshire from Poland in June 2005, it was the Army which was initially the object of her ambitions.

"In my personal life, I'm a very creative person, and I like being free to do what I want. But in my professional life, I have always liked the idea of being in a big structure with order and regiment, and within that, still having something unique to offer," she said.

"I was really interested in the Army, but couldn't get any further than an open day – I was told I wouldn't be eligible to join as I wasn't a British citizen at the time. It was disappointing because, in my mind, that's what me being in that big structure looked like."

After time in jobs such as acquisitions and administration and on career breaks spent travelling following this setback, Natalia was turned on to the prospect of a police dispatch role.

Despite not having a wealth of knowledge at first, Natalia says the more she learnt about what the position would entail, the more she envisioned herself as a key cog in a fast-paced and relentless machine.

She continued: "It might not be the first job you think of in the police, but I realised it would definitely be a way of getting that work environment I wanted.

"I've really liked it so far and the insight I've gained into an organisation like the Force and how it works, especially behind the scenes, has been very pleasing for me."

Within her role deploying officers and



Natalia (left) and a colleague with their Chief Constable's Commendations.

overseeing the distribution of police resources, Natalia has become accustomed to all the quirks of working for an emergency service – the demands, the obstacles and, not least, the shift patterns, where she has settled into a six-days-on, four-days-off routine.

As someone intent on using their free time for maximum fulfilment, the 31-year-old has long had an enthusiasm for volunteering, and in February 2023, she added a significant commitment to her gap of rest days when she completed Special Constabulary training.

This, she says, has not overwhelmed her life with all matters policing, but rather enhanced the job satisfaction she already had.

"I was aware of the role of a Special

Constable even before I started as a dispatch officer, but it has become more of an obvious opportunity since. I've volunteered in many projects and I've always found it more rewarding when you can do it for free. However much I enjoy my day job in the police, I can take that even further as a Special."

Based in Aston, Natalia's Special duties have mostly seen her attached to the area's response team, becoming the recipient of instructions she would usually be on the opposite end of in West Midlands Police's control room – something she reveals took some getting used to.

"It was a bit weird at first," she said. "Getting told what to do and where to go and sometimes, although the dispatcher is just doing things their own way, thinking 'I would have done or said that differently'.

"But it definitely works. I already had good knowledge of the same areas, so that has helped a lot. My Special shifts follow on from my day job shifts in the Force's 24-hour calendar, so I'm working with C-Unit officers on dispatch and then D-Unit officers as a Special."

Away from practical benefits, the way in which her two Force posts align has, perhaps more importantly, given Natalia a greater understanding of her colleagues – particularly the ones out on the streets of Birmingham.

"Aston is a busy place and there's always demand on the police. Before starting as a Special, it was easier to get a bit impatient with response officers when I'd be on dispatch. You don't have eyes on the situation they're in and it can lead you to wonder what the hold-up is," she added.

"Now I've seen what it can be like for myself, I can appreciate officers being stuck on a job. So, that's a big positive impact of one of my positions

“ I’VE VOLUNTEERED IN MANY PROJECTS AND I’VE ALWAYS FOUND IT MORE REWARDING WHEN YOU CAN DO IT FOR FREE. HOWEVER MUCH I ENJOY MY DAY JOB IN THE POLICE, I CAN TAKE THAT EVEN FURTHER AS A SPECIAL.

on the other.”

Natalia went on to discuss the reality of being a Special in more detail.

“We all need to do right by the public – that’s the most important thing. They see Specials as the same as any regular officer because they can’t tell the difference from a uniform.

“That can feel like quite a lot of pressure, but what makes it easier is that colleagues and sergeants are very supportive. They also see you [Specials] as the same, but in a way that makes you feel valued, not pressured.

I really enjoy working on my unit because of the people I’m with.”

When pushed for a highlight of her time in the Special Constabulary so far, something was already fresh in mind – the recent Chief Constable’s Commendations ceremony, held at Villa Park on Friday 19 July.

As part of the commendation awards, West Midlands officers involved in a serious crowd disorder at a football match were recognised. Together with mutual aid, the officers delivered an exceptional response to disturbances at the same venue, when Aston Villa played at home to Legia Warsaw in the Europa Conference League last November.

In violent scenes, Legia fans attacked police with a range of missiles including bottles and bricks. Natalia is not only Polish but her home city is Warsaw so she played an instrumental role in communicating with the supporters so they would cooperate with law enforcement on the night.

She translated police instructions into Polish as well as liaising with fans who had suffered injuries and who had been taken into custody.

“It was a very intense few hours but the entire police unit was outstanding. I think I did well personally, too. Some fans were more willing to listen to me when they realised I was Polish and actually from Warsaw,” she revealed.

“It was an honour to be part of the team receiving the commendation award. Everyone played their part that night and I was happy to play mine.”

Having had a taste of public order policing, Natalia says she is interested in these sorts of tasks becoming a regular fixture within her Special Constabulary responsibilities moving forward.

She also looked to the future as a whole, underlining her optimism towards the current landscape of her Force duties.

“I am really liking where things are at right now, in both of my police roles. They work so well together.

“I’ve never had a job I’ve enjoyed as much as being a Special in particular. I would honestly recommend it to anyone.

“To some people, it might sound strange that I devote so much of myself to the police force, but I am so excited for what lies ahead,” she ended.

‘It’s not always easy, but it’s definitely rewarding’



Special Constable Lewis Davies (second right).

While he may still be growing into his role in the Force, Federation member Lewis Davies has already experienced enough as a Special Constable to say he is fully enjoying police life.

His duties as a Special have slotted in nicely next to his day job as a paramedic, a profession he has been in for nearly four years. Fittingly, it was during a shift for one emergency service – West Midlands Ambulance – that his dwindled interest in another was reignited, the 26-year-old revealed.

“I liked the idea of being in the police from quite a young age but, as I grew up, being a paramedic came to the forefront of my mind,” he explained.

“You obviously work with police officers as a paramedic sometimes and one day I just started chatting to a couple and they told me more about the role of a Special. I then realised there was a way for me to get into the world of policing without having to sacrifice anything else I had going on,” he said.

Last November, Lewis completed training to become a Special Constable, and he started in West Midlands Police’s neighbourhood team for Digbeth. A busy and demanding environment, the central Birmingham location meant he quickly grasped the fundamental differences between police and ambulance frontlines.

He added: “It’s pretty full-on. As a police

officer, I can attend an incident where someone has been hurt and provide some initial medical aid. In ideal circumstances, you will obviously then surrender that to a paramedic, which can feel strange as that person would be me if the date and time were different on any given week.

“Preserving life is the fundamental purpose of a paramedic, but it’s only one part of the job for a police officer – you also have to focus on preserving evidence, witnesses, investigation, public welfare and so on. I’ve had to learn to shift my mindset depending on which uniform I’m wearing.”

Lewis also discussed the ‘unique’ nature of Digbeth, explaining how he sees the end product of working on patrol in the area as something of a hybrid duty between neighbourhood and response policing.

“It is still very much a community-based job but, ultimately, we are talking about one of the UK’s biggest city centres, so we are reacting to things every day.

“I am really enjoying that mix, though. You may be on a foot patrol, for example, but it’s high visibility – so you’re primarily acting as a neighbourhood officer yet there’s also a readiness for violent and anti-social behaviour, among other things. It’s not always easy, but it’s definitely rewarding.”

In addition to the fulfilment being unlocked by his day-to-day role activity, the Special Constable was full of praise for the high number of inspiring officers he has found himself surrounded by in the infancy of his police career.

“My Special Inspector, Inspector Maskill, has been brilliant with me from day one, as have so many colleagues, both Special and regular, some more inexperienced like me and some with many years under their belts. I think our Force supports Specials so well, to be honest,” he said.

“The Special supervision team is so visible when checking in and backing me up, and that means a great deal. They make it known there are opportunities for Specials to develop as officers in all sorts of skills – traffic, airport, homicide, Taser and many more.”

Lewis also identified the Federation as a contributing factor to his sense of optimism, describing its protection of Special Constabulary members as ‘100 per cent a great thing’.

He ended by looking towards his future: “I have the feeling I joined [West Midlands Police] at a good time. It seems like there is everything in place for Specials to feel valued, grow and, most importantly, make a difference.”

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.

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- RAC Motor Breakdown Assistance

Visit the Federation website for further details:

www.polfed.org/westmids

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*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



RAC breakdown cover helps keep you on the road

Officers who subscribe to the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme have access to a comprehensive range of cover. In this feature, we focus on the RAC breakdown cover which is included with the policy.

RAC motor breakdown cover for personal cars and motorcycles is included for all serving and retired members and their partners who subscribe to the Group Insurance Scheme.

Cover, which extends to the member in any vehicle they are driving or in which they are a passenger, includes:

- Roadside
- Recovery
- At home
- Mis-fuel rescue
- Onward travel, and
- European assistance.

Partners will also be covered for RAC motor breakdown if the member is subscribing for spouse/partner life assurance benefits.

RAC cover can also be extended to include other family members who normally reside with you by payment of an annual additional premium.

Roadside

If the vehicle breaks down within the UK more than a quarter of a mile from the member's home, RAC will:

- Send help to repair the vehicle at the roadside. This could be a permanent or temporary repair; or
- If unable to repair the vehicle at the roadside, RAC will recover the vehicle and passengers to, along with any caravan or trailer attached to it, to a destination chosen by the member up to a maximum of 10 miles from the breakdown.

This cover is similar for vehicles found to be broken down at home.

Recovery

If the RAC is unable to repair the vehicle under Section A (Roadside) or Section B (At Home), it will recover the vehicle from the breakdown location to a single destination chosen by the member within the UK. For long distances, it may use more than one recovery vehicle.

Mis-fuel

If the vehicle has broken down due to a mis-fuel in the UK, the RAC will attend to:

- Drain, flush and clean out the fuel system
- Fill the vehicle with up to 10 litres of fuel to get the vehicle mobile and allow the driver to drive to the nearest fuel station
- Arrange the safe disposal of the contaminated fuel.

If there is mechanical damage caused by the mis-fuelling, the RAC will recover the vehicle and passengers to a destination chosen by the member up to a maximum of 10 miles from the breakdown. If more than five people require transportation, it may need to provide transport in separate vehicles.

Onward travel

If the RAC attends a breakdown under the roadside or at home elements of the policy, and cannot fix the vehicle on the same day, it will help the member by making arrangements to allow the continuation of the journey. The member can choose one of the following options, subject to availability: hire car, alternative transport or overnight accommodation.

Qualifying vehicles are: car, motorcycle 49cc or over in the UK or 121cc or over in Europe**, motorhome, minibus fitted with not more than 17 seats including driver, light van, estate car, MPV or 4X4 sports utility vehicle that conforms to the following specification - maximum legal laden weight of 3,500kg (3.5 tonnes), maximum overall dimensions of 6.4 metres length, height 3 metres, width 2.55 metres (all including any load carried).

Some elements of the policy include supply of a hire car, subject to a number of terms, but RAC will arrange and pay for the hire cost of a replacement vehicle for up to two consecutive days or until the vehicle has been repaired. In Europe, this extends for up to 14 consecutive days, or until the vehicle has been repaired if

sooner. If you are not eligible for a hire car, and provided RAC has agreed the cost, you may be reimbursed for up to £35 a day if you arrange your own hire car.

Further information about the breakdown cover and telephone numbers are available in the [RAC documents](#).

* Policy limits and exclusions may apply, please see [policy wording](#) for full terms and conditions.

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RANGE OF COVER

The Group Insurance Scheme represents value for members by providing a range of cover, including RAC motor breakdown plus critical illness insurance and all at a competitive price.

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 - [Critical illness cover with the option for additional cover for an added monthly cost](#)
 - [RED ARC](#)
 - [RAC motor breakdown cover](#)
 - [Legal expenses cover](#)
 - [Personal accident cover](#)
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Fed member celebrating new baby with bleed kit and defib fundraiser



Kiran and Krupa Patel await their new arrival.

Sergeant and his wife run competition to guess their newborn's gender, weight and birth date.

A West Midlands Police Federation member is raising money for two pieces of life-saving equipment to mark a lasting legacy for his new baby.

Sergeant Kiran Patel and his wife, Krupa, are expecting a child in October and have tied their good news in with a fundraiser for a defibrillator and bleed control kit to be installed in their local town of Shirley, Solihull.

The couple have invited supporters of their JustGiving page to leave a comment along with their donation, guessing the baby's gender, weight and birth date. The donor with the closest guesses will then receive a prize paid for by Kiran and Krupa as the winner of the competition.

Kiran said: "From my own experiences as a police officer, I know how important it is to have these two items readily accessible and visible on the streets.

"Even if our fundraiser helps to save one life, it will have been totally worth it - and will mean we commemorated our baby by giving something valuable to the community around us."

Kiran, who has been a police officer for 10 years, has recently been involved with Operation Elevate, a nationally recognised project introduced by the Force to support and regenerate areas most affected by serious and organised crime in the West Midlands.

The 34-year-old had a hand in the installation of four bleed control kits across Alum Rock and Washwood Heath earlier this year as part of the initiative's focus on knife

crime and its consequences. This came after he teamed up with the official single point of contact for the kits, PCSO Zoe Bishop, and advised on locations for the equipment to be fitted.

These were the latest additions to a number of kits already in operation across the region, all stemming from the mission of the Daniel Baird Foundation - the charity set up by Lynne Baird after her son, Daniel, was tragically stabbed to death in Birmingham seven years ago.

"I was on duty the night Daniel died," recalled Kiran. "A couple of days later, I remember going to his parents' house and having a conversation with them.

"I've seen up close the impact knives can have on families and loved ones. The bleed kits are amazing in helping to preserve life by allowing treatment to begin before paramedics arrive. They're so simple to use, and they can be used to treat any catastrophic bleed."

Zoe said: "I'm very grateful to Kiran for the partnership struck up in getting more of the West Midlands covered with the kits. To hear that he is now trying to get another one set up through his own individual efforts shows his passion for making the public safer and for the foundation's aims.

"I wish him the best of luck with his

fundraiser."

Meanwhile, ambitions for a defibrillator have a personal connection for Krupa after her father suffered a cardiac arrest in 2019.

The intended outcome of the fundraiser is for the defibrillator and bleed kit to be stored together in a cabinet from [the foundation](#), setting its target at £1,500.

Any surplus monies raised will be donated to charity or put towards further bleed kits, Kiran revealed.

"I would like to give a genuine thank you to my peers in the Force for their generosity so far - we both appreciate it so much," he said.

"I'd also like to acknowledge the support we have had from other emergency services and the NHS. It's so important we all are recognised for the work that goes into saving lives."

The sergeant added that a recent baby shower has generated extra donations, with guests contributing to the fundraiser by way of a gift to the family.

And while he doesn't want to set his sights too far into the future with father duties set to commence soon, he hopes his fundraising exploits will continue beyond his new arrival.

"We wouldn't want things to end there. When it comes to equipment that can literally be the difference between someone keeping or losing their life, there can never be enough around," he ended.

Federation members can support Kiran through his [JustGiving page](#).

“THE BLEED KITS ARE AMAZING IN HELPING TO PRESERVE LIFE BY ALLOWING TREATMENT TO BEGIN BEFORE PARAMEDICS ARRIVE. THEY'RE SO SIMPLE TO USE, AND THEY CAN BE USED TO TREAT ANY CATASTROPHIC BLEED.



PC Kiran Patel on the beat.



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Expenses and travelling time

In the latest in a series of features putting the focus on Police Regulations, we answer common questions about expenses.

Remember you can find the answers to many of your queries about regulations [on our website](#).

Q I've been retained on duty and had to buy a meal what can I claim?

A If you have been retained on duty more than two hours past your normal finish time then you are entitled to claim for a meal. The only requirements under regulations are that the meal is reasonable and receipted.

There is no requirement for you to purchase this meal after your normal finish time. If you were aware earlier in your shift that you would be retained on duty you can purchase this meal in anticipation. However, if you are then not required to remain on duty you would not be entitled to claim for it.

Q Am I entitled to claim for a meal during my shift?

A If an officer is unable to obtain a meal in their usual manner and as a result it costs the officer more money, then the officer can claim the difference between what they normally pay and the cost of the replacement meal.

There is no distinction between an officer being on a scheduled tour of duty or being required to work on a rest day. It all hinges around being able to obtain a meal in their normal manner. If they can't then they can claim.

It is a reasonable expectation that if your role means you may not be able to return to your parade station for refreshments then you ensure you have the facility to take your food with you (ie cool bag). However, if you have a microwave meal, for example, you should be provided with facilities to heat this when you take your break. These facilities do not have to be at a police station providing they are available for you to use.

If these facilities are not available to you and this means you are unable to take your meal in the usual manner, then you are entitled to claim for a replacement meal.

In conclusion unless the officers can show they were unable to obtain a meal in their normal manner and have deducted the cost of that meal from the replacement meal the claim will fail.

Q I was injured in the execution of duty and have had medical costs, am I entitled to claim?

A You are entitled to be reimbursed by the Force for any NHS medical, dental or optical charges as a result of being injured in the execution of duty. This is set out in Regulation 35 Annex V and covers any charges under Section 77-79 of the National Health Services Act 1977.

Q I'm having to attend a police residential training course what can I claim?

A At the Police Negotiating Board meeting on 9 February 2005, it was agreed that the incidental expenses allowance for those attending residential training courses should be frozen at its current level of £4.43 per night. The maximum allowance is £17.77 per week, except where an officer has to attend for a week's course of training on the preceding Sunday night and will therefore be in attendance for five nights.

Q What will I get paid if I have to work away from home?

A Currently officers are only entitled to payment for working away from home if they are 'held in reserve'. The allowance for being 'held in reserve' is £50 per night.

An officer is 'held in reserve' if they are serving away from their normal place of duty and are required to stay in a particular, specified place rather than being allowed to return home. An officer is not 'held in reserve' if they are serving away from their normal place of duty only by reason of being on a training course or carrying out routine enquiries.

If you are 'held in reserve' you may also be entitled to hardship allowance of £30 per night. This only applies if 'proper accommodation' is not provided. The definition of 'proper accommodation' is a single occupancy room with use of en suite bathroom facilities.

The hardship allowance is reliant on the 'held in reserve' allowance. Therefore, if you are not 'held in reserve', you are not entitled to the hardship allowance irrespective of the level of accommodation.



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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

2025 retirement seminars: book your place

West Midlands Police Federation hosts seminars to help members navigate their way through retirement, and has just announced dates for 2025.

The one-day sessions will cover a range of topics including how to retire, the police pension schemes, taxation and the state pension.

They will explore next steps such as CV writing, starting a business, and police officers' transferable skills.

The seminars will also look at 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 at Guardians House in Coventry Road, Sheldon.

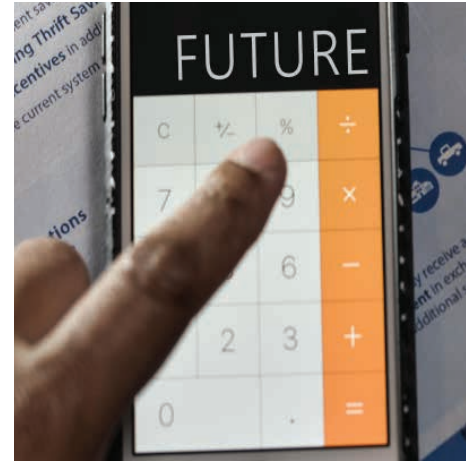
The final session of this year will take place on 12 December, with both the October and November seminars fully booked already.

The dates for the 2025 seminars are:

- 16 January
- 20 February
- 20 March
- 17 April
- 19 May
- 19 June
- 17 July
- 21 August
- 18 September
- 16 October
- 20 November
- 11 December.

Members are encouraged to let the branch know as soon as possible if they would like to attend by emailing westmidlandspf@polfed.org

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 and members are asked to advise of dietary requirements.

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:-

Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Walsall, and Wolverhampton.

- **FREE ADVICE** – Pensions, Benefits, Computing, Taxation;
- **MEMBER SERVICES** – Welfare Support, Car, Health and Travel Insurance, Car Purchase, Domestic Appliances, Trusted Legal Advisors, Mobile Phones, Travel Discounts, Job Opportunities + National/Local Websites, National Magazine, Branch Newsletters;
- **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:-**

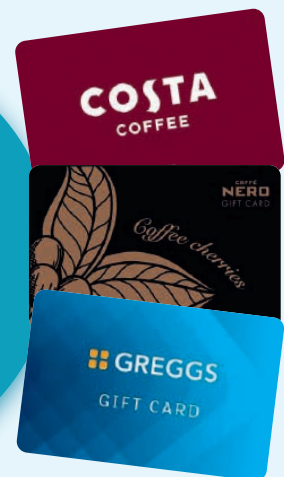
www.NARPOWestMidlands.org
www.NARPO-Wolverhampton.co.uk

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Choose a £5 e-gift from Greggs, Costa Coffee or Caffè Nero when you get a Police Mutual Car Insurance quote by 30 November 2024.



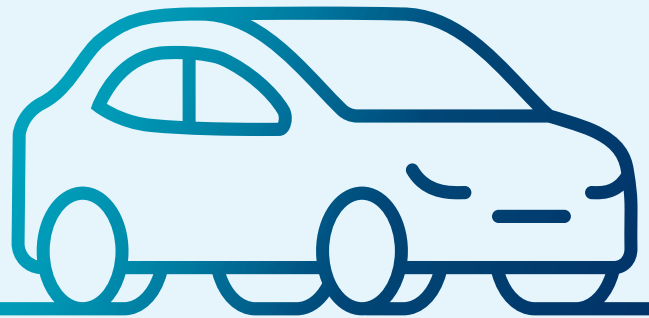
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Looking for a new mortgage? Let our partners help



West Midlands Police Federation members can access a wide range of offers, discounts and services through the branch's Member Services partners.

Whether you are a first-time buyer looking to get a foot on the housing ladder or someone looking to re-mortgage, move home or enter the buy-to-let market, then we have a number of partner firms who may be able to help you.

You can find out more by visiting our [Member Services pages](#), simply click on the logos to visit each company's page, but we here's a round-up:

FIRST CALL FINANCIAL

Moving?
Improving?
Remortgaging?

Louise Norton CeMAP (independent mortgage adviser) is available to give independent mortgage advice and financial review with free initial consultations, whatever your situation.

Louise holds free mortgage and financial reviews at various stations or Guardians House every day, 10am to 4pm. Available to all police officers and police staff. Station and home visits can be arranged as well as the appointments at Guardians House.

Booking an appointment

To book a FREE, independent mortgage consultancy or financial review with First Call Financial (Leics) Ltd, call Louise on **07968 317671** or email louise@firstcallfinancial.co.uk

Fees
A typical fee is £200. However, for anyone responding to this promotion (website and poster) a fee will not be charged.

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE.

First Call Financial (Leics) Ltd is an Appointed Representative of PRIMIS Mortgage Network which is a trading name of Personal Touch Financial Services Limited. Personal Touch Financial Services Limited is authorised

and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

HANSON WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Independent financial advisers first established in north east England in 1998, the company now has advisers covering the whole of the UK as well providing mortgage information and advice to clients over the telephone.

Initial meetings are free.

Mortgage advice

Hanson Wealth Management has a team of fully qualified mortgage advisers to find you the best mortgage deals from the whole of the market.

Around 80 per cent of mortgages are now submitted to lenders via brokers and so lenders must come up with great deals to win the business. Knowing what's important to the different lenders can mean the difference between a successful application and a rejected application.

Contact

You can contact Hanson Wealth Management by telephone on 0191 495 2254, email enquiries@hansonwealth.co.uk or visit www.Hansonwealth.co.uk

PICKFORDS SOLICITORS

A small team of legal specialists with 40 years' combined experience in residential property, commercial property, family law and business law, Pickford Solicitors are based in Birmingham but act for customers across the country.

Residential conveyancing experts

Pickfords' experts understand that moving home can be a stressful time that is why the team aim to make the process as smooth as possible and ensure they keep you constantly updated and informed throughout the process.

The company's specialisms are:

- **Buying**
- **Selling**
- **Buy to let**
- **Re-mortgages**
- **Transfers of equity**
- **Shared ownership**
- **New builds**
- **Right to buy.**

The offer

Pickford Solicitors offer Federation members a 15 per cent discount on all legal fees, when instructed to help with any of the above mentioned services.

Contact

To contact, Lucie, ring **0121 726 5980** or **0771 955 0610**, email lucie@pickfordsolicitors.com or visit www.pickfordsolicitors.com

WARREN & CO

Warren & Co provide a completely impartial and comprehensive view of the UK mortgage market for all serving police officers and police staff working alongside Police Federation branches in all forces.

Appointments are offered at your home or place of work and there are also regular surgeries across the Force area. [Check the remaining surgery dates for 2024.](#)

Warren & Co has a state of the art mortgage sourcing system giving access to many thousands of mortgage deals, some of which are exclusive to intermediaries. Its advisers have a complete knowledge of the police pay structure and the police pension scheme which gives us a huge advantage when negotiating with lenders.

If you would like to discuss your mortgage circumstances then you need to speak to Warren & Co.

More details on [Warren & Co are available on their website.](#)

[Helping officers in financial difficulty.](#)



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