

FEDERATION



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December 2024/January 2025

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WELCOME

Welcome to the December 2024/January 2025 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.

Published by:
XPR Communications Ltd

Editor:
Rich Cooke, chair

Design and production:
XPR Communications Ltd

Contact us:

Guardians House
2111 Coventry Road
Sheldon, Birmingham
B26 3EA

Telephone:
0121 752 4900

Email:
westmidlandspf@polfed.org

www.polfed.org/westmids

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Reflecting on 2024



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

It barely seems possible that we are now just a few weeks short of the end of 2024. This year seems to have passed by particularly quickly.

In many ways the Force ends the year in far better shape than it began. Thanks to your hard work we emerged from 'Special measures' status, in record quick time.

We are slowly progressing towards a more traditional, flexible and resilient style of policing focused on the distinct localities and identities within the West Midlands, which has one of the youngest and most diverse areas in the Western world.

We deal with unique challenges on a budget that still badly fails to reflect the challenge. The police funding formula sees West Midlands Police as the 'poor man' of England and Wales. While other areas of the country now have levels of officers significantly above 2010 levels, 15 years on we remain in deficit by hundreds of officers and with a growing skills gap as experienced officers leave at the first opportunity due to the effects of the botched pension reform of the last decade and sheer fatigue at the unrelenting pressure and mental anguish of 'the job'.

Our branch was pleased to see that some experienced officers were being offered the opportunity to stay on after taking their pension at the optimal moment. The retire and rehire scheme offers the chance to cash in your lump sum after a 30-year career and enjoy it, and why shouldn't we for all the sacrifices we make?

The West Midlands scheme is not as favourable as some such as the Metropolitan Police scheme where participants can realise their lump sum and receive their monthly pension plus salary. But in truth such differences are based on 'economic' reality, the perceived need (and funding) is greater in London and therefore that Force is applying the enhancement to attract the numbers it wants and can afford.

The West Midlands Police budget is one of the most pressured in the UK and the current offer is, as a result, less favourable, yet still

retired officers return and, although we continue to fight for the the best possible terms, we are so happy to keep them. The risk is we won't always keep the brightest and best. It also means our officers feel undervalued compared to others and we feel such schemes ought to be offering the same across England and Wales.

There is nothing wrong with police officers arranging their finances and tax affairs in the most advantageous way for them and their families – something I very much intend to do if given the opportunity. It's something we should all consider. Some sanctimonious media headlines referring to "gold plated" public sector pensions really miss the point. We are not and never should be expected to be martyrs to the job. Accordingly, West Midlands Police Federation has access to an independent financial adviser who offers members financial wellbeing appointments and pensions calculations.

I apply the same logic to the Chief Constable and his recent decision to retire after 30 years and the Police and Crime Commissioner's decision to rehire him after a month. I don't blame him. But the way in which this was revealed to the majority of colleagues and the public has, and I think the Chief might agree, been problematic.

A Chief Constable will never please everyone, neither will I. However, colleagues will naturally compare the ability of the Chief to retire and be rehire, which is the decision of the PCC, to their own ability to do the same in a force which is currently limited in number and capped at inspector rank.

Nevertheless, I am glad the Chief is not leaving us. I believe he is leading us on an important journey back to that traditional community-based grass roots model of policing which is simple and effective, and we are seeing a gathering momentum. Since his arrival crime is undeniably down. Arrests and detections are significantly up and criminals will have noted the tangible change.

We are getting a grip of intractable problems like knife crime, with the more robust approach to offenders – adult and

“ **ONE OF THE KEY ISSUES WE WANT TO RAISE WITH MPS IS THE PROCESS FOR DETERMINING POLICE OFFICER PAY. FEDERATION MEMBERS VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY IN FAVOUR OF THE POLICE FEDERATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES (PFEW) CAMPAIGNING TO RE-ESTABLISH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS ON BEHALF OF POLICE OFFICERS.**

juvenile - many colleagues wanted. Priorities are far clearer. It's been a rocky road though, and there have been some differences and candid conversations along the way. Big strategic goals are imperative, but we have to remember the individuals who make it all possible and sometimes the speed of change is painful. That's where I hope your Federation can come in and make the positive difference you need.

The other issue that has gone down like the proverbial 'deposit in the punch bowl' has been the removal of the Long Service Gift for all colleagues who reach 22 years' service. This was something of priceless value, a thank you to celebrate the devotion of many of the best years of your life to the public.

“ **WE WANT TO SEE MORE OFFICERS TASER TRAINED, WE ALSO WANT TO SEE MORE DOUBLE-CREWING IN POLICE VEHICLES. BOTH OF THESE ISSUES WILL BE FRONT AND CENTRE FOR US DURING 2025.**

At a cost of up to £200 though it clearly did have a price and is a discretionary spend the Force thinks it cannot afford in straightened financial times. Despite the biggest tax rises in recent history, there seems little sign of police funding being where it needs to be for the foreseeable.

I just question whether we can afford not to maintain such recognition? Retention costs us massively and the last time I saw figures voluntary resignations nationally were at record highs. These small gestures mean a lot and my inbox has reflected that strength of feeling. I sincerely hope we can get the Force to reconsider or, at the very least, come up with another way of making our longest serving colleagues feel their value.

In common with many people, I am sure, the approach of the end of each year always leads me to a period of reflection in terms of the highlights and the low points of the previous 12 months.

Much of the year seems to have been dominated by politics, it would seem, and, of course, in July Labour secured a convincing win in the General Election. Almost

immediately after the new MPs for our region were elected, we wrote to each of them to ask for individual meetings with us.

We feel policing is in crisis and we wanted to engage with those representing us in Parliament so that we could explain the challenges we are facing and possible solutions, while also wanting to hear their views.

To date, we have heard back from only a small minority of our MPs, which is disappointing to say the very least. All too often, we hear politicians commenting on policing matters, however, few seem interested in working with us to improve policing for the benefit of not just the Force and the people working in policing, but also for the benefit of the people we serve.

We will continue to seek meetings with our representatives in Westminster and perhaps members could try contacting their constituency MPs too. Surely, policing is important to them. And, if it is, why are they not responding to us? We represent the rank and file officers of the West Midlands, those very same officers who day in, day out put their lives on the line to serve and protect their communities.

One of the key issues we want to raise with MPs is the process for determining police officer pay. Federation members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) campaigning to re-establish collective bargaining rights on behalf of police officers.

More than 50,000 officers - 98 per cent - who took part in a Federation poll voted emphatically in favour of this campaign, giving PFEW an undeniable mandate to pursue collective bargaining and the ability to directly negotiate officer pay, an opportunity and a trust that must not be squandered. I will continue to be tenacious in pursuing this on your behalf, West Midlands Police Federation having been the prime mover of this proposal back in 2022.

The results of the survey were announced this summer but, to date, we have not really seen any outward signs of the campaign being underway.

I think we need to ensure that we stay focussed, not just on the current year pay award, but on the processes in place for determining that award. This is the key to a long-term positive change and us being given the respect we deserve as a body of men and women whose legal rights of recourse are severely limited. Perhaps we will get a better pay deal next year, but that doesn't mean we should ever shy away from the campaign that members voted for.

It cannot be left for our pay award to be determined on a whim by the Government of

the day. We hold a unique place in society and, as such, we deserve to be treated fairly, and consistently.

Our current pay review mechanism, the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), replaced the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) and with it the Police Arbitration Tribunal (PAT), not only removing our ability to negotiate our on pay and conditions, but also access to an arbitration process.

PRRB is far from independent. It is made up of a panel of Government appointees. The Government sets its remit, telling it what pay award it can consider, and it can also choose to ignore any recommendations the body makes, if it doesn't like them, which it has already done in recent years.

As a result, the Police Federation withdrew from the PRRB and now finally wants to see it replaced with a fair process that respects police officers' unique situation.

Almost immediately after the General Election, we saw striking workers secure significant pay rises, far higher than we were given, perhaps exploiting the lack of power we have due to the restrictions placed on us.

So, just as the end of year signals a period of reflection, it's fair to say that the New Year also brings a time for setting targets and objectives for the year.

In 2025 West Midlands Police Federation will continue to push for collective bargaining. But it will also continue to put a strong emphasis on officer wellbeing. Policing is an incredibly challenging role, one in which we can be repeatedly dealing with traumatic incidents. They can take their toll.

Coupled with that is the need for officers to be fully equipped and trained. We want to see more officers Taser trained, we also want to see more double-crewing in police vehicles. Both of these issues will be front and centre for us during 2025.

Finally, I would just like to thank each and every member for their commitment to policing during 2024. We appreciate it's not easy, we appreciate you can be pulled from pillar to post, trying to meet the demands placed on the police service, particularly in areas where you are picking up the pieces for another organisation that might actually be better placed to deal with those involved. But we also appreciate that policing is a job like no other and for the vast majority of officers it's about doing their best, giving their all and seeking to help people in their time of need or in an emergency.

I hope you all have a happy Christmas period and that, even if you are working over the festive season, you get the opportunity to spend some time with your loved ones. Stay safe, and all the best for 2025.

Branch and region concerns lead to debate on rep suspensions

The West Midlands branch of the Police Federation, along with regional support, has opened a debate within the Police Federation's National Council on the use of Appendix 9, a mechanism that has been used in recent months to suspend two high profile officials.

The chief executive officer (CEO) of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), however, felt unable to allow a debate - as set out in Standing Orders - and subsequent vote on the issue proposed to the November meeting of its National Council (NC) in Cardiff. The NC is made up of the chairs and secretaries of all 43 branches of the staff association.

West Midlands Police Federation's branch chair, Rich Cooke, stated his Branch Board believes this has led to a democratic deficit and goes against the principles of branches representing their members and bringing forward items for discussion and a decision based on Standing Orders, a set of rules governing how such matters are to be resolved.

"As agreed by officers on our Branch Board who are all reps elected by our members, we

submitted a paper asking the National Council to support an immediate cessation of the use of Appendix 9, subject to a comprehensive review and democratic vote on any proposed replacement," he said.

"In lieu of this, we wanted the Federation to deal with matters through internal challenge and support or else, where appropriate, refer issues or complaints for assessment under misconduct regulations or local force grievance processes where they arise."

"We were told our proposal does not have any legal standing under the Regulations or the Federation Rules and is therefore unlawful, which meant that we were unable to present our paper at National Council and, in turn, no vote was possible. Our Branch Board believes that stymies our democratic right to raise issues on behalf of our members.

"The paper had support of the other branches in the West Midlands region initially being seconded by West Mercia Police Federation. While we understand that acceptance of our paper, and the possible backing of the NC may have led to a requirement for legislative change, we don't feel this should have prevented the matter



being voted upon democratically.

"Arguably, the paper may not have been able to achieve its objectives in its original format, but we feel it should have been debated in the manner prescribed in Standing Orders which allows the proposer time to present its case, with a right of reply at the end. Such proposals, if accepted, are then subject to a weighted vote which corresponds to the respective size of individual branches. We would contend the time for legal scrutiny comes once the NC has been able to debate the matter, amend if necessary and vote to take the next steps necessary."

During the NC meeting in November, there was a CEO led presentation, which was followed by an exchange of views. The CEO explained that PFEW believes Appendix 9 exists to uphold standards of professionalism within the organisation and to protect its reputation, and he believed safeguards are in place to ensure fairness, such as the employment of lawyers to investigate and advise panel members to act correctly within the process.

“ WE WERE TOLD OUR PROPOSAL DOES NOT HAVE ANY LEGAL STANDING UNDER THE REGULATIONS OR THE FEDERATION RULES AND IS, THEREFORE UNLAWFUL, WHICH MEANT THAT WE WERE UNABLE TO PRESENT OUR PAPER AT NATIONAL COUNCIL. TO ME, THAT STYMIES OUR DEMOCRATIC RIGHT TO RAISE ISSUES ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERS.

It was also said that PFEW was seeking to minimise the number of times the Appendix 9 process is used, with numbers of suspensions in recent months being less than in the past.

In the paper, it was explained that the mechanism that preceded Appendix 9 was Schedule 6 of the old Police Federation Regulations, seen by some as a more democratic recall mechanism, but that had nevertheless been criticised by the Normington review of the Federation (2014) as being too difficult to trigger and thus inadequate.

Therefore, the review recommended an ethics, standards and performance (ESP) process be created which was later established under what is now known as Appendix 9.

The report, the paper continued, did include the noteworthy statement: "It is clear that it is a fallback, to be used sparingly." Normington emphasised that support and challenge always be preferable before formal disciplinary processes are initiated (Chapter 4, Professionalism and Representation).

After only a few years, it was said, Appendix 9 was recognised as inadequate and malfunctioning, itself becoming the cause of reputational damage. The process itself was said to be being questioned as to its impartiality and the proportionality of sanctions available following the finding of a breach of standards – removal from office and/or ban from office.

Processes, it was argued, usually take several months or even longer to complete and are very damaging to both the individual concerned and, it was contended, the reputation of the Federation.

In such cases, there is no need for there to be a corresponding breach of police professional standards. As a result, attempts were made to re-write Appendix 9, however, it is believed by West Midlands Branch, little progress has been made, and current practice may incur significant financial cost the organisation can ill afford.

Rich concluded: "We are concerned about how the reputation of PFEW is being affected by these repeated episodes and are counterproductive for us all."

Discounted parking for Fed members

Members of West Midlands Police Federation can now get discounted rates if they leave their vehicles at the Euro Car Parks (ECP) site in Wolverhampton.

ECP is offering a 30 per cent discount on parking, which would equate to a daily saving of £1.65 if paying for 24-hour parking.

Darren Neville, West Midlands Police Federation treasurer, has welcomed the move and says it will help reduce officers' outlay on parking.

"We would like to extend our thanks to ECP for giving our members this discount," he says, "If members can save £1.65 a day when using this car park it will soon add up to a significant saving.

"We appreciate it can be difficult to find affordable parking around many of our police stations and bases so we are currently trying to find out if we can find similar discounts elsewhere too."

Discounted parking rates for Federation members are as follows:

Parking period	Current tariff	30 per cent discount	Discounted tariff
1 hour	80p	24p	56p
2 hours	£1.70	51p	£1.39
3 hours	£2.40	72p	£1.68
4 hours	£2.80	84p	£1.96
24 hours	£5.50	£1.65	£3.85

To access the offer, please [email the Federation office](#).

Monthly season tickets can also be bought for £50. Simply [email ECP](#).

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This offer is for subscribing members of West Midlands Police Federation only.

2025 retirement seminars: book your place

Officers approaching the end of their police service are invited to attend a West Midlands Police Federation retirement seminar.

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 benefits for police officers, such as the Group Insurance Scheme and 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.

The dates for the 2025 seminars are:

16 January	20 February
20 March	17 April
19 May	9 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.

Fed rep outlines dedication to assaulted officers

West Midlands Police Federation representative Darren Neville has vowed to continue 'doing the right thing' for members needing support following an assault.

Darren has been a workplace representative since 2015, when he decided he wanted to give back to the Fed after he needed assistance himself the previous year.

When his son became ill shortly after birth, Darren, overwhelmed with worry, was unsure of who to turn to in getting help to arrange dependency leave.

"The Fed rep I had, who is retired now, was outstanding with me. I was really stressed, and he just picked up the slack and sorted out four weeks' leave for me," said Darren who is the branch treasurer. "Me and my family will always be indebted to the Federation for that. I always say that your life as a police officer is like a marriage – there is a lot of give and take, and sometimes you just need a bit of help when you can't do it yourself.

“ THE FED REP I HAD, WHO IS RETIRED NOW, WAS OUTSTANDING WITH ME. I WAS REALLY STRESSED, AND HE JUST PICKED UP THE SLACK AND SORTED OUT FOUR WEEKS' LEAVE FOR ME.

"The support I received left me wanting to give that bit of help to others."

As a workplace rep, Darren, 49, has helped members with a range of issues and disputes such as health and safety, grievance procedure and attendance support.

Where he has completed his most role-defining work for the Fed, though, has been with assaults.

Currently a PC on a priority crime team in Wolverhampton, it was actually a duty earlier in his career that inspired him to dedicate his focus as a Fed rep on officers put in harm's way by violence.

"I was a personal safety trainer when I was on a response team based in Smethwick. Obviously, I was already well aware, but it



Darren Neville.

turned me on even more to the dangerous world of policing," he explained. "Ever since, I've had that desire to look after people in this respect and help them look after themselves."

Darren looked for ways to influence the Force through the training and equipment given to frontline cops. Although initially he was "seeing that assaults just weren't reducing", his first real breakthrough came when he started to receive information on every assault officer across Wolverhampton.

"I will personally contact every officer at the centre of a report and see if they have been properly communicated with and listened to by the Force," he said. "I can also respond to their needs, be it with ensuring they are satisfied with the report and processing of the incident or pointing them in the direction of physical or psychological support they may not have received yet."

Darren has emphasised to the Force the importance of remembering that, just like the public, police officers are victims when they are assaulted.

In practice, he explained, this means providing assaulted officers with regular updates along the course of the crime's investigation, in line with the Victim Code.

He also regularly engages with Federation branch chair Rich Cooke, who then meets with a working group featuring Assistant Chief Constable Mike O'Hara, for police officer and

staff assaults.

The initiative also hosts representatives from the Federation, the Force's CID, the Criminal Justice Alliance and various wider staff unions.

"The group has been fundamental in implementing many new processes. As well as that, we have done a lot of work to develop existing structures within the force," Darren said.

"An example is their 10-point plan in response to officer assaults and hate crimes, which is a wonderful piece of guidance. We have pushed for all individual steps to be consistently used and stuck to, and I will personally make sure the appropriate sergeant has access to it upon each and every incident.

"I think it's important that when the Force deserves credit, it should get it, too – there is still work to do, but things are definitely starting to get better.

"More officers are now trained in Taser, and they have looked at the THRIVE (Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and Engagement) model so they can not only respond well to assaults but prevent them in the first place."

He and the West Midlands Police Federation team want tougher and more robust sentencing for those who assault the police, which he believes would be aided by a quicker distribution of medical evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service.

"The delay that exists is not really good enough and we want to see that eliminated in the future," he explained. "I think there's still an element of assaults on police officers not being taken quite as seriously as we would like. A man has recently been imprisoned for three years for punching a cop in the heat of the riots – but what about the other 364 days of the year, when these incidents aren't as high profile?"

Rounding off, Darren offered his advice to any Federation member struggling after being on the receiving end of violence.

"Remember, it is never acceptable for an officer to be assaulted," he said. Speak to your supervisor or, failing that, any supervisor. If you want to go down the Federation route, contact a representative. Just don't keep it to yourself. Even if you think the incident was very minor and insignificant, it's important that you reach out."



‘I’m always here to help’

A West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative with a sky-high commitment to wellbeing explains his motivation.

Thanks to his unique Force role, West Midlands Police Federation’s Aaron Bell was already used to helping people in some of the most trying moments of their lives before he started volunteering as a workplace representative.

As a sergeant with 22-and-a-half years of experience in policing, Aaron has held positions on response, custody and the crime safety bureau in demanding areas such as Queens Road and Sutton Coldfield, and match days at Aston Villa and Birmingham City football clubs.

Now, he is a senior officer in an airport policing team, leading the Force’s operations at Birmingham Airport.

“I started in this role in 2017 and, I have to say, it’s been one of the best periods of my career,” Aaron said.

“It’s a one-of-a-kind job – it is privately funded but I am the face of the Force at the airport. I’m the first police officer visitors to our country will see, and that comes with a level of trust and respect.”

Aaron, 46, says that despite being able to apply a lot of prior police knowledge as he has grown into the role, he has also had to get to grips with the nuances of aviation.

Requirements of the post include responding to aircraft accidents, safeguarding vulnerable passengers and dealing with extra-territorial offences committed by UK residents once they touch back down on English soil.

“Those are just some of the tasks I have,”

he added, “Every decision I make has a huge impact – that can be on people’s immediate safety, both on the ground and in the air, and also on people missing their holidays and connecting flights, for example.

“It is a big responsibility that I can never take lightly and one I am proud to hold every day.”

Along the way in this position, Aaron decided he wanted to not only be an ambassador for the Force, but also an ambassador for his colleagues as a Federation workplace representative.

He stepped into this role five years ago and began helping countless members with work and personal issues.

What he finds most challenging – and also most rewarding – is attending the support meetings of officers who, for whatever reason, are struggling to meet the demands of the Force.

These difficult conversations, he says, have served as an eye-opener to him that not everyone in the police is lucky enough to find the particular role that works for them.

“From my perspective, I want to ensure these meetings are not disciplining officers. Instead, it should be about helping them by understanding why they are currently not able to deliver the level of service they would want to,” Aaron explained.

“It comes with the territory that many of these officers are considering leaving the Force, so what I really like is when I can help

to reverse that decision.

“While it’s not always possible, there are thousands of jobs in West Midlands Police, and I often tell these people, ‘let’s find the right one for you.’”

Aaron, who has also fought the corner of ethnic minority colleagues as part of the Black and Asian Police Association for more than two decades, revealed he was motivated to become a rep after backing he received from the Federation when he was subjected to a complaint.

Despite the difficulty it caused, this incident is firmly in the past for Aaron – all he holds onto is the support and advice he received from the Fed that made him want to give something back.

Besides, testing interactions with the public are something he has had to grow even more accustomed to in his airport role – an environment few would argue can be rivalled when it comes to high stress.

“They may sound a bit less serious than other responsibilities I have touched on, but another big part of the job is keeping on top of hostile moments,” explained Aaron.

“People can turn into someone else at an airport and end up lashing out – even those who would never usually be involved in a run-in with police. We’ve all been there when trying to catch a flight, but there is obviously a line and it can be overstepped sometimes.

“As well as being that stern presence, I also want to be that friendly face, working with people to get them through the airport as calmly and safely as possible.”

Again, this desire of being approachable is something Aaron always aims to replicate in his Federation position.

The sergeant ended by making it clear to members he is always available to lend a helping hand: “As I mentioned, my work as a Fed rep has reminded me how difficult this job can be at times.

“Because we get so caught up in serving the public, I think we can all be guilty of forgetting to look after our own wellbeing.

“It’s important that members know they should never suffer in silence – I may have a busy role in the Force, but I will always have time for them, too,” he said.

Federation elections: Could you be a workplace representative?



Members are being encouraged to take part in the Police Federation elections – either by putting themselves forward for election as a workplace representative or just by voting for their preferred candidates.

The nationwide election process starts at the end of December and all stages will be completed by 1 October 2025 when the new National Board will be in place.

Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, is urging all members to find out more about the election process and consider putting themselves forward as a candidate in the elections.

“The Federation provides a critical role within the force, representing its members, negotiating on their behalf and seeking to influence key decision-makers such as the Chief Constable, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Government,” he explains.

“The Federation gives members a voice. On a daily basis it provides help and support to members, helping those going through conduct proceedings, for example, or giving advice on Police Regulations. While the role of a workplace representative can be demanding and challenging, it is also incredibly rewarding knowing that you can help a colleague in their time of need.

“All workplace representatives undertake training with the Federation and the skills they learn can also help them in their day-to-day policing role.

“I hope that as many members as possible will take an interest in the elections and find out more about the role of the Federation and how they can get involved. People often stand on the outside, criticising the actions of others but if you want to bring about change you

need to get involved, and help be a driver for the change you want to see.

“Even if you decide not to put yourself forward as a candidate, then please make sure you vote for your preferred workplace representatives, the branch chair and later next year the national chair.”

The Force’s constables, sergeants and inspecting ranks, as well as Specials, can stand in the local workplace representative elections, with successful candidates being given the opportunity to represent, support and negotiate on key issues for their colleagues.

Nominees are being sought for the upcoming elections for positions across the Force area with nominations opening on 30 December and closing just over three weeks later on 24 January 2025.

Workplace reps undertake their Federation duties alongside their policing role. Find out more about the role.

Information on the first round of elections for workplace reps, including how to self-nominate and how to vote, will be emailed to all members.

As well as being able to vote for their local workplace reps, all members can vote for their local chair and the national chair through an electronic voting system.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE POLICE FEDERATION

Each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales has a Federation Branch Council made up of all the workplace reps for that force.

From the Branch Council, an executive – the Branch Board – is elected, including a secretary and treasurer.

Other lead roles include equality, health and safety, and conduct and performance.

As part of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), local reps also have the

chance to put themselves forward for the national body whenever opportunities arise.

The Police Federation of England and Wales, which has 139,000 subscribing members, was established in 1919 and has represented the interests of officers from the ranks of constable to chief inspector ever since. Specials have been able to subscribe to the Federation an access its help and support since 2022.

THE ELECTIONS

Becoming a Federation workplace representative is a great way to develop new skills and make a difference for your colleagues.

Any subscribing Federation member – from PC to chief inspector, and including Specials – can nominate themselves and stand for election as a workplace rep. Successful candidates automatically becoming part of their local Branch Council. From there, they can stand to be on the local Branch Board, then stand for a regional or a national role if they wish.

Federation branches across the country are making a special plea to members from under-represented groups to consider putting themselves forward to become reps to help better reflect the diversity of the membership.

The election process:

- **Members vote for workplace reps (Branch Council)**
- **The Branch Council votes for the Branch Board members**
- **Members elect the local branch chair**
- **The Branch Board elects the local branch secretary**
- **The chairs and secretaries from branches across England and Wales make up the National Council**
- **The National Council votes to elect the National Board**
- **All members vote to elect the national chair**
- **The National Board selects the general secretary**
- **The National Board votes in remaining principal officers.**

“WHILE THE ROLE OF A WORKPLACE REPRESENTATIVE CAN BE DEMANDING AND CHALLENGING, IT IS ALSO INCREDIBLY REWARDING KNOWING THAT YOU CAN HELP A COLLEAGUE IN THEIR TIME OF NEED.”



‘I thought I could bring a different perspective’

Chris James originally became a Federation workplace representative because at the time he put himself forward there were not many reps who were relatively young in service within the West Midlands Police Federation branch.

At that time in 2018, he had 11 years’ service working in frontline roles. He was very passionate as a workplace representative, becoming discipline and then equality trained to help further support members. Then he became a local trustee and later joined the local Branch Board.

After just over three years as a busy workplace rep, he decided to put himself forward as a candidate for the full-time role as the branch deputy secretary. There was a contested election and he was the successful candidate, starting the new role in January 2022.

“I applied to become a rep when I did because the election processes had all changed and become more transparent following the Normington review in 2014. I could see that there was going to be a shift in how things had been done previously and that appealed to me,” says Chris.

“I think I could have probably become a rep few years earlier. But, in those early years of being a police officer, there are so many other things you are trying to get your head around.

“When I started considering becoming a rep, I looked at most of my local reps and they were officers who were over 20 years into their career. So I felt I could bring a different perspective.

“I think that’s one of the things that I was

very conscious of – I felt we needed more diversity within the Federation to better reflect our members. I think in many ways we have achieved that in recent years. But I would still like to see more people from diverse groups getting involved so that we can be a truly representative organisation.”

Chris has a good working knowledge of Police Regulations which stood him in good stead while volunteering as a workplace rep and now in his full-time role.

“ MOST PEOPLE JOIN THE POLICE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND MY FED WORK HAS ALLOWED ME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY HELPING AND SUPPORTING COLLEAGUES.

“Most people join the police to make a difference and my Fed work has allowed me to make a difference by helping and supporting colleagues,” he explains.

One area where he has been able to make a significant impact has been the launch of the welfare van. Having set out to secure the new facility, he successfully lobbied the Force for funding and has been pleased to see the van put to good use.

The welfare van was launched two years ago after a long campaign by West Midlands Police Federation. Since then, it has proved to be an essential resource for officers at major

incidents, events and scenes of crime. The van, which was bought by the Force and fitted out by the Federation, gives officers access to welfare facilities when away from police buildings.

Chris came up with plans for the vehicle in 2021 after he conducted a 12-month survey of crime scenes which revealed between 18 and 24 officers attending the average scene were going without basic facilities.

“This is a great example of how Federation representatives can make a difference to their colleagues’ lives,” says Chris. “Reps are often called upon to offer help and support if a Fed member has issues at work, and that is a large part of what we do, but there are also opportunities to take proactive steps to improve members’ lives with initiatives such as the welfare van.”

He added: “In the modern policing world, we no longer see jobs through from meeting the victims and taking the initial report to bringing the offenders to justice. As a rep, supporting colleagues, I can be part of an end-to-end process with very tangible and meaningful results.”

Chris has expressed his desire to continue his work within the Federation, particularly the work he has been doing since taking on his full-time role.

A lot of this has been around ensuring support and accountability for local representatives, while promoting diversity and increased transparency. He has also specialised in Regulation 28 (Pay Panel) and the ill-health retirement process where he has not only supported members but also had positive influences on changes to these areas.

ELECTIONS – YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

How do I get more involved in the Federation?

The entry point is standing to be a workplace representative for your local branch - this role automatically makes you part of the Branch Council, which is made up of all elected workplace representatives within a given force.

Who can stand for election as a workplace rep?

Any subscribing member who is not suspended can stand as a candidate, so long as they were a member of the Federation two months before nominations opened - e.g. nominations open on 30 December, therefore it will be necessary to have been a member on 30 October 2024.

How do I stand for election?

Any member wishing to stand for election can self-nominate via an online portal during the nomination period - a link will be provided to all members via email. They will need to fill in the online nomination form and sign the Standards and Performance agreement. You can self-nominate in all elections, there is no need to be nominated or seconded by another member.

Who can vote?

Any member can vote so long as they were a member of the Federation two months before nominations opened - e.g. nominations open on 30 December, therefore it will be necessary to have been a member on 30 October 2024. Members must only vote for the elections in their own LPA. So, if you work in Walsall, for example, you can only vote for reps standing to be a rep for Walsall. When voting, you must make sure you tick the relevant boxes to show where you work. Voting in an election in another LPA could constitute election fraud. Also, unless otherwise stated, you can vote in elections in which you are standing.

How do I vote?

Voting will be online during the voting period - a link will be provided to all members.

How will the Branch Council election results be announced?

Once the voting period closes, candidates will be informed via email if they have been successful. Branches will also receive an electronic copy of the results, as will the national general secretary, who is the arbiter of the election process.

How is the branch secretary elected?

The branch secretary is elected by the Branch Board at its first meeting from among the members just elected to the Branch Board. It is intended that branches will conduct this election themselves.

How is the branch chair elected?

The branch chair is elected by members across the Force. Nominees for branch chair come from among those just elected to the Branch Board. Those eligible to stand will receive an email link so that they may self-nominate.

Ahead of the voting period, members will be sent a link via their email address giving them access to the voting platform so that they can vote.

How is the branch treasurer elected?

The branch treasurer need not be a full 'facilities time' officer, but they must be a member of the Branch Board and be elected by the Branch Board from among its members. It is for branches to determine how they elect the treasurer. It may well be appropriate for the treasurer to be elected after the secretary at the same meeting.

How are any other branch officers to be elected?

It is for Branch Boards to determine whether they have, and how they elect, any other branch officers.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Federation office.

Elections timetable

LOCAL BRANCHES

Workplace representatives

- **30 December 2024** – Nominations open
- **24 January 2025** – Nominations close
- **3 to 23 February 2025** – Voting takes place
- **27 February** – Results are announced.

Branch Boards

- **17 March** – Nominations open
- **6 April** – Nominations close
- **14 to 28 April** – Voting takes place
- **30 April** – Results are announced.

Branch chairs

- **2 May** – Nominations open
- **9 May** – Nominations close
- **13 to 27 May** – Voting takes place
- **28 May** – Results are announced
- **1 June** – Branch chair and other officials take office.

Additional national members

- **28 May** – Nominations open
- **4 June** – Nominations close
- **5 to 12 June** – Voting takes place
- **13 June** – Results are announced, completing National Council.

National chair

- **16 June** – Nominations open
- **23 June** – Nominations close
- **30 June to 14 July** – Voting takes place
- **15 July** – Results are announced
- **1 August** – National chair takes office.

National Board

- **1 August** – Nominations open
- **10 August** – Nominations close
- **12 to 19 August** – Voting takes place (regional stage)
- **20 August** – Regional stage results are announced
- **21 August to 28 August** – Voting takes place (National Council stage)
- **29 August** – National Council stage results are announced
- **1 September** – National Board members take office, with the exception of national secretary.

Key national roles

- **1 to 30 September** – Key roles on National Board, including secretary, are selected
- **1 October** – New National Board in post.

This is the draft timetable for the election process.



Justice secretary in pledge to overhaul CJS

A pledge by the justice secretary to overhaul the justice system so things can be done 'fundamentally differently' have been cautiously welcomed by West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich was responding to an interview with *The Times* at the end of last month in which Shabana Mahmood, the Labour MP for Birmingham's Ladywood constituency, said that crisis resolution within the criminal justice system (CJS) was not enough.

"I'm determined that this narrow path to a different system in which we can all have confidence is the one I have to tread. What I want to deliver at the end of it is justice system that lives up to the ideal of justice. I'm going to have to go big. There's no other option and I'm determined to make a success of it," she said in *The Times* article published in its Saturday magazine.

Rich said the early release scheme launched by the Government to help ease prison overcrowding was one sure sign that drastic action was needed. The scheme saw some prisoners released after serving 40 per cent of their sentence.

"It has been very depressing and frustrating to see these inmates being greeted with champagne as they walked out of the prison gates having served less than half of their sentence. Officers will have worked hard to bring these cases to court and eventually put these criminals behind bars so it will have an impact on them, but it also has a massive

effect on the victims of crime who will not feel that justice has been served," he explained.

"It is demoralising for all concerned - with the exception of the offenders with many probably feeling they have got off lightly, given the fact that their sentences have been reduced by so much.

"This is just one element of the criminal justice system that is currently failing, but we are fully aware that there are other areas that also need looking at as a matter of urgency. We have already written to the justice secretary to seek a meeting as we have our own ideas as to where change is needed in the criminal justice system.

"Take for example, the sentencing of offenders who attacked police officers during the violent scenes that erupted in cities over the summer months. The Government was very firm that these people should feel the full weight of the law, which we would agree with. However, it should be the case that anyone who attacks a police officer or another emergency service worker should receive tough sentencing at any time.

"If we are to restore faith and confidence in the criminal justice service, we need to see the law applied consistently, we need to see those who deserve to be in prison serving the actual sentence that is handed down, otherwise it is fundamentally dishonest, and we need to have enough places in prisons to enable this to happen and that means investment in new prisons. Prison capacity has flat-lined for years

yet we have seen a significant population increase, as well as more offenders being bought to justice for serious sexual and violence crimes for which prison is the only option to protect the public. And the first priority must be protecting the law-abiding public."

While the justice secretary has not yet confirmed a date when she can meet with West Midlands Police Federation officials, she has agreed to do so.

"We are hoping this meeting can be held as soon as possible so that we can sit around the table and share our ideas with Ms Mahmood," says Rich, "Police officers play a pivotal role in the criminal justice system and, as the organisation representing rank and file officers, the Federation is ideally placed to offer an accurate picture of where the criminal justice system is failing and discuss ways of improving the service we provide to the communities we serve."

In *The Times* article, the justice minister acknowledges that 80 per cent of offenders are reoffenders and Rich said this 'revolving door' of people going in and out of prison needed to be tackled.

He also welcomed the fact that she has vowed to call on the Treasury to get more money for the courts to help deal with the backlog of cases, while accepting that it was the whole CJS that needs reform.

“ THIS IS JUST ONE ELEMENT OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM THAT IS CURRENTLY FAILING, BUT WE ARE FULLY AWARE THAT THERE ARE OTHER AREAS THAT ALSO NEED LOOKING AT AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

Roads policing officers: bid to confirm numbers nationwide

A road safety charity's decision to try to find out an accurate figure for the number of dedicated roads policing officers in forces across England and Wales has been welcomed by West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers.

Tim, who is also the national Federation's lead for police pursuits and police driver training, said the move by the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) should be seen as the start of a wider review of how a decline in roads policing officers is impacting on road safety and criminality on the roads network.

"This work is long overdue," says Tim, "But nonetheless I am pleased that PACTS has undertaken to seek these figures. I am hopeful

that once we have an accurate picture of the number of dedicated roads policing officers then there will be a fuller review of whether there are enough, what their role should be and where more investment is needed.

"For me, it's blatantly obvious that we need more officers dedicated to policing our roads. It's not just about educating roads users, prosecuting those who flout our driving laws and reducing casualties and fatalities on our roads. Criminals use our roads to make their way around the country too and having more police officers on our roads will help catch them too."

Tim was speaking after attending the latest PACTS meeting, the first he has attended for around for five years.

He was disappointed to find that many of the topics being discussed were the same as when he last attended, though he recognised the group's aspiration to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads.

Tim felt that, since the Government made roads policing a Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) in February 2023, there should have been more developments to discuss.

"I had hoped that the fact chiefs now have to consider roads policing as part of their SPRs we would have seen the agenda move on a little," said Tim, "I wanted to see what difference the SPR status had made and whether there had been any tangible changes to service delivery and investment.

"Those at the meeting discussed initiatives





Tim Rogers.

for enforcement and there seemed to be a genuine belief that we have seen a re-investment in roads policing. But I am not convinced that roads policing is being given the priority it – and the public – deserve.

“The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, is repeatedly quoted as saying that open and frank conversations need to be had when she talks about the dire state of the country’s finances and I think we need to echo that by saying policing is also in a dismal state due to chronic under-investment. That applies across the whole police service but I believe roads policing has been particularly hard hit.

“We need to address this as a matter of urgency and I hope once PACTS sees the actual number of roads policing officers we have then it will act. There has been a tendency in the past to fix the immediate problem, but no one is looking at this in a more strategic way and ensuring we have substantial and sustained re-investment in roads policing.

“In addition to the extra funding, we also need to see more work on the profile of a roads policing officer. What should their role entail? What skills do they need?”

In June 2020, a PACTS report urged the

“FOR ME, IT’S BLATANTLY OBVIOUS THAT WE NEED MORE OFFICERS DEDICATED TO POLICING OUR ROADS. IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT EDUCATING ROADS USERS, PROSECUTING THOSE WHO FLOUT OUR DRIVING LAWS AND REDUCING CASUALTIES AND FATALITIES ON OUR ROADS. CRIMINALS USE OUR ROADS TO MAKE THEIR WAY AROUND THE COUNTRY TOO AND HAVING MORE POLICE OFFICERS ON OUR ROADS WILL HELP CATCH THEM TOO.

Government to prioritise roads policing to save lives and fight wider criminality and also criticised cutbacks in roads policing, pointing to a widespread belief that a failure to reduce the number of deaths on the road is at least partly due to a downgrading of roads policing.

It highlighted international research evidence of the effectiveness of roads policing in increasing compliance with traffic laws and reducing road casualties, cutting some collision types by around a quarter.

Detailed analysis by PACTS of the “fatal four” offences (speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, driving under the influence of drink or drugs, and using a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel) since 2010 showed that where enforcement has been increased, compliance has improved and casualties have dropped but, where cutbacks have affected enforcement, there has been little or no improvement.

PACTS called on the UK Government and, where powers are devolved, the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to:

- **Make roads policing a national priority in the SPR**
- **Reverse the cuts and expand the number of specialist officers**
- **Take a more proactive approach to the use of technology and information sharing.** Police forces were recommended to:
- **Work more closely with other forces and agencies**
- **Engage the support of the public through communications and use of dashcams**
- **Collaborate on research and improve monitoring and reporting.**

Tim welcomed the recommendations at the time, and believes that making roads policing a national priority in the SPR was a step forward, but he said action is still needed on many of the other recommendations.

“It’s particularly interesting to note that while PACTS called for forces to work more closely together, here in the West Midlands we have recently seen the abolition of the Central Police Motorway Group which was recognised as a successful model for cross-force collaboration,” said Tim.

He added: “The cuts to policing budgets affected all areas of the police service,” says Tim, “But we have definitely seen a bigger impact on roads policing and I am not convinced we have seen any increase in the number of specialist roads policing officers.

“Chief constables have to allocate their budget accordingly and address the need for more dedicated roads policing officers. They should not be trying to make it appear that they have more dedicated roads policing officers than they do by claiming that officers working on a crime team on the road are part of their roads policing unit.

“Here in our Force, for example, we have seen the Police and Crime Commissioner set up a road harm team of 32 officers which, on face value, is a good thing. But these 32 officers have been taken from elsewhere and their focus is not road harm: it’s crime.

“That cannot be right. I think if chief officers don’t start to prioritise roads policing the Government might have to take matters into its own hands and give the roads policing budget to a transport policing style model for the roads.”

PACTS is a registered charity, promoting evidence-based policies to improve to road, rail and air safety. It works with the Government, Parliament, experts and stakeholders. Its founders were responsible for the 1981 legislation which made it compulsory to wear a seatbelt in the front seat of a car.

“THE CUTS TO POLICING BUDGETS AFFECTED ALL AREAS OF THE POLICE SERVICE,” SAYS TIM, “BUT WE HAVE DEFINITELY SEEN A BIGGER IMPACT ON ROADS POLICING AND I AM NOT CONVINCED WE HAVE SEEN ANY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SPECIALIST ROADS POLICING OFFICERS.

Shock illness helps Jon in equality role

A shock diagnosis of a life-threatening heart condition has enabled West Midlands Police Federation equality lead Jon Nott to get an even better understanding of some of the issues raised with him by members.

Jon believes living and working with the condition means he can particularly empathise with officers whose own health is affecting their careers.

"Members come to see me about their own issues due to an illness or injury and often say things like 'you don't know how it feels', but I can now quite honestly say that I do and that has made a big difference in terms of my equality role," says Jon.

"Knowing that I have faced my own health crisis, also seems to help the officers as they know I can offer invaluable advice and genuine understanding due to my own experiences."

“KNOWING THAT I HAVE FACED MY OWN HEALTH CRISIS, ALSO SEEMS TO HELP THE OFFICERS AS THEY KNOW I CAN OFFER INVALUABLE ADVICE AND GENUINE UNDERSTANDING DUE TO MY OWN EXPERIENCES.

For Jon, that is a silver lining in what has been a rollercoaster of emotions since finding out he had heart failure.

A fit and active sportsman, Jon had contracted a viral infection in late 2020 and was severely affected.

"I was really knocked about with it for about two weeks, constantly short of breath and I just couldn't stop coughing," he explained.

When months later, he was still struggling to get his breath and would find it took him some time to recover from walking up two flights of stairs to his office, he went to see his GP.

But when a range of tests didn't pick up anything of note and he was told everything was OK, he refused to accept it, particularly since he was getting alerts about his heart rate

on his Apple Watch.

In December 2023, he went back to his doctor and demanded more tests.

"I pretty much lost it in the GP's room, telling him I knew my own body and I knew something wasn't right. My advice to anyone now, given my own experience, would be to trust your own instincts. You know your own body, you know what is and isn't normal for you, and if you feel something is wrong, be persistent," Jon explains.

In his case, his determination to get to the root of the problem quite possibly saved his life.

He was referred to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and saw a consultant in January this year. After a series of appointments and tests found himself sitting in a waiting room with a print-out from his ECG showing his name, date of birth and the words 'result abnormal'. That's when the reality of his condition began to hit home.

"It was all really shocking," he said, "Every time I went to the hospital for an appointment, I would look round the waiting room and see that, at 48, I was the youngest one in the room, by far and often by around 20 years."

He was finally diagnosed with an acute form of cardiomyopathy. At this point, his heart was only working at 10 per cent of its capacity and he remembers visiting his in-laws on the south coast and struggling to walk a quarter of a mile in about 20 minutes.

The devastating diagnosis was quite hard to take, given that Jon had always been lean, regularly played five-a-side football and had - in December 2019 - achieved a black belt in kickboxing.

Once his condition had been identified, he was put under the care of the advanced heart failure team, sent home, told to do no exercise and put on a waiting list for a pacemaker and internal defibrillator, but he was not given an indication of how long it would be before he was called in for treatment.

"Initially, I didn't tell anyone at work, just the branch secretary, Tim Rogers, who was very supportive. I just felt sheer panic and it got to the point where I would go to bed thinking, 'am I going to wake up in the morning?'"

Shortly after being put on the waiting list, he was home alone while his wife, Emma, was away with friends, when he woke up at around 3am with a racing heart and breathlessness.



Equality lead Jon Nott.

"I was getting heart palpitations, chest pains and felt really light-headed," Jon recalls.

He was admitted to hospital and hooked up to a defibrillator by doctors clearly concerned about how unwell he was.

Specialists advised almost immediate surgery, and his operation went ahead on 30 April.

After a period of recovery, he has now returned to work, on restricted duties, and is starting to exercise again, even managing to play five-a-side.

"I am building up my fitness again, and I am able to live a fairly normal life now," says Jon.

He is thankful that, as a member of the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance Scheme, he is able to claim under the critical illness cover, which is something he advises all members to look into if they find themselves in a similar situation.

"I think everyone is aware that the critical illness cover is there for cancer patients or those with other illnesses and conditions that are more talked about, but it also covers so much more," Jon explains.

"So, if you are in the unfortunate position of facing something like I did, please make sure you check out the cover."

The insurance pay-out will give Jon and his wife more financial security and enable them to offer extra financial support to their son and daughter, who are both in further education.

Jon concluded with a message to colleagues who might be reeling after being diagnosed with a serious illness.

"It doesn't have to be the end of your career. Following treatment, I am now able to provide full, meaningful work for West Midlands Police and the Federation," he said.

Check your breasts: make it a habit

All women and men should get into the habit of checking their breasts regularly, according to West Midlands Police Federation equality lead Julie Fleming.

Julie, who underwent treatment for breast cancer last year, says everyone needs to look for changes in their breasts.

“October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month so I encouraged everyone to check their breasts and then make a note to do it again a month later. It’s as simple as that: do it once, make a note of the date and put a note in a diary or mobile phone to check again a month later,” says Julie.

“You can find plenty of information online giving advice on how best to self-check and I

know many GPs and practice nurses are willing to give you tips too.

“From the age of 50, women are generally invited for an NHS mammogram every three years but we all need to be checking ourselves between those screenings.

“It is also worth noting that I was in my 40s when I found a lump in my breast so I hadn’t even reached the age where I would have been called in for a routine mammogram.

“If I hadn’t felt the lump myself and sought medical advice, it could have been years before it was picked up and treated. The outcome could have been very different.”

Signs of breast cancer include a lump or swelling in the breast, upper chest or armpit, a

change to the skin such as puckering or dimpling, a change in the colour, size or shape of the breast.

But regular checking will help people identify any unusual or new changes.

“I get that people are scared of what they might find, and I know the sheer panic I felt when I found my lump. But, and I can’t stress this enough, the sooner you get it checked out the better,” says Julie.

“Often it turns out to be nothing sinister, however, in my case my cancer had already spread to my lymph nodes by the time I sought help so I am so thankful I went to my doctor when I did.

“I just want everyone to get into the habit of checking themselves – it takes minutes, and can save your life. All too often we spend a lot of time and energy on trying to kick bad habits so perhaps now’s a good time to develop a new good habit.”

[Read more about Julie’s breast cancer journey.](#)

“ I GET THAT PEOPLE ARE SCARED OF WHAT THEY MIGHT FIND, AND I KNOW THE SHEER PANIC I FELT WHEN I FOUND MY LUMP. BUT, AND I CAN’T STRESS THIS ENOUGH, THE SOONER YOU GET IT CHECKED OUT THE BETTER.

‘The biggest recovery method for me was talking’

To mark World Mental Health Day 2024 (10 October), West Midlands Police Federation workplace representative Matthew (Matt) Manwaring urged members to break down barriers around the stigma of mental illness in policing.

Matt, who is a sergeant, has been a strong advocate for mental health support in the police force ever since his own struggles more than 20 years ago when a series of incidents at work left him battling suicidal ideation.

Once on the road to recovery, he became central in efforts to roll out Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) to more people within West Midlands Police. This enabled more officers to be supported by specially trained practitioners in the long-term aftermath of a traumatic event witnessed on the job.

With help such as TRiM now readily available to police officers in a way it wasn’t for Matt at his lowest, he encouraged Federation members to take advantage of the support available.

“There is a perception that police must always be tough and resilient, but we need to remember it’s okay to feel the impact of what we do,” he said.

“The support and education around mental health is there for police officers and it’s there for a reason. You are not weak if you need help, and it’s important you don’t let anything



The theme for this year’s World Mental Health Day is mental health in the workplace.

get in the way of seeking it.

“Before that point, I think police officers need to know where they’re at themselves with their mental health, so they can keep on top of it.

“My advice would be to stay present and pay attention to how you feel in the moment, and embrace the human side of yourself – if you’re feeling anxious, for example, don’t shut that out when it’s a valid feeling.”

World Mental Health Day is an annual awareness day designed to bring attention on mental illness and its impact on people’s lives.

It was started in 1992 by the World Federation of Mental Health, which this year chose the theme of mental health in the workplace.

Matt outlined his backing for this focus: “Policing is a profession that always needs recognition for its unique challenges, and as such, the unique consequences it can have on its workers.

“When it comes to trauma, the average police officer will witness 600 to 800 events with some kind of traumatic element over a 30-year career, compared to 6 to 8 events for an average person outside of the Force.

“Within all those incidents, officers will respond differently and be most deeply affected by different things – it just depends on you as a person and your mind. So, while being united as one towards mental health awareness is crucial, I also think that individualism needs to be recognised, so then nothing slips under the radar.”

The 49-year-old also highlighted the importance of speaking out about any struggles they are going through, so no mental health difficulties in the Force go uncared for.

“The biggest recovery method for me was talking. It took me a while, but everything got easier from that point onwards. In my opinion, the Federation have got a point now where they are very strong on supporting its members with their mental health. We can point you the direction of many different platforms, based on your needs.

“I would like to remind members that you can always contact your local Fed rep for a conversation in total confidence. And me, personally – I am always around to talk to.

“Come rain or shine, we will always be there to help you,” Matt ended.

Review of the year



JANUARY



West Midlands Detective Sergeant John Price said he was 'surprised' and 'humbled' to have been recognised with the King's Police Medal (KPM) in the New Year's Honours. John's award recognised his leading role in enhancing digital forensics.

West Midlands Police Federation deputy chair Jase Dooley praised the bravery of members after violent clashes broke out in the stands during the FA Cup derby between West Bromwich Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Jase said the officers prevented a mass disorder inside West Brom's ground the Hawthorns when fighting started moments after Wolves took a 2-0 lead. Play was suspended while officers brought the crowd trouble under control.



A life-saving cop who rescued two elderly women from under an unstable car was named the overall winner at the inaugural West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Awards, taking home the PC David Green Shield.

Father-of-two Glenn Brabham clinched the title having saved the lives of two elderly women who had been accidentally run over in a car park.

A sergeant diagnosed with cancer two years earlier received the first ever Sam Hughes Inspiration in Policing West Midlands Police Federation Bravery Award after he set up a support group for others living with the illness. Darren was recognised for selflessly providing a 'lifeline' to colleagues facing cancer, despite undergoing treatment himself.

FEBRUARY

Simply banning Zombie knives isn't enough, said West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke, who argued secure detention for juveniles is also needed. Rich was commenting on the new news that zombie-style knives and machetes will be banned under new legislations coming into force in September.

Chief officers could be leaving police drivers 'exposed' by failing to meet their commitments in embedding new legislation, West Midlands Police Federation secretary



Tim Rogers told the Federation's Roads Policing Seminar. Tim, the national Federation's pursuits and driver training lead, was addressing a discussion on the effectiveness of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

West Midlands Police Inspector Adhnan Afzal said 'the community spirit' helped him to overcome 28C heat to complete the Marrakesh Half Marathon. Adhnan completed the course around the Moroccan city in support of Parkinson's UK and to raise awareness about the disease.

A team of 17 West Midlands officers, including West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke, were in training for the New York Marathon in May to raise money for a children's cancer charity.

MARCH

West Midlands Police Federation health and safety lead Patrick McBrearty called for all custody blocks in the Force area to have two sergeants working a shift not one. He said he had known single sergeants to be in charge of up to 18 prisoners at one time, which in his opinion was 'totally unacceptable'.



The secretary of the West Midlands Police Federation emphasised the need for a fully independent police pay review mechanism. Tim Rogers said the current system had proven to be unfair, unfit and detrimental to the pay and conditions of police officers.

A new Elizabeth Emblem to recognise public sector workers who die in service was launched. Named after the late Queen and conferred by His Majesty The King, the emblem will be awarded to the next of kin of police officers, firefighters, and other public servants, a move welcomed by West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.



The latest Federation pay and morale survey revealed that more than one in five (22 per cent) of police officers nationally were planning to quit the service. More than three-quarters of those (78 per cent) said that poor treatment from the Government was a contributing factor in wanting to leave. Morale (85 per cent) and mental health and wellbeing (73 per cent) were also key factors.

APRIL



West Midlands Police Federation discipline lead Dave Hadley highlighted the impact of lengthy conduct investigations on individual officers, their colleagues and the public. He said that the time it takes for allegations to be heard needed to be sped up for the sake of everyone involved.

The loss of canteens, social facilities and subsidised accommodation - on top of real-term pay cuts - had been 'a hammer blow' to policing, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke. The abolition of 'non-pecuniary rewards' made it even more difficult to recruit and retain officers, he argued.



Acting Special Sergeant Ryan Courtney made history by becoming the first West Midlands Special to carry a Taser. He said 'having that added layer of protection' gave him and his family 'peace of mind' when he is volunteering.

MAY

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster was elected for his second term in office with Federation branch secretary Tim Rogers calling on him to get behind officers and do everything within his powers to combat low Force morale.

Branch deputy chair Jase Dooley renewed calls for all officers to be trained and equipped with Taser after four were sprayed in the face with a mystery liquid - thought to be ammonia.



A £3.5 million Government investment in tackling knife crime was a 'drop in the ocean' compared to the size of the problem, according to West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke, a long-time campaigner against knife crime.

Changes to the police conduct process which will allow police chiefs, or their delegate, to chair gross misconduct hearings and sack officers found guilty opens them up to accusations of marking their own homework, said Dave Hadley, the West Midlands Police Federation conduct lead. He also said he fears the changes could add to the length that investigations take to conclude.

JUNE

The chair of West Midlands Police Federation strongly urged all members to take part in a poll to find out if they would like the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) to pursue collective bargaining as part of a future package of enhanced industrial rights for police officers.

The poll, emailed out to all members, including Special Constables, launched on Monday 3 June and stayed open until Friday 23 June.

New statistics revealed an average of 120 officers a day were assaulted last year with more than 44,000 attacks on police officers in England and Wales in 2023, with one in four attacks causing injury.

It was a nine per cent increase from around 41,000 assaults in 2022 and 48 per cent higher than five years ago. More officers were assaulted in Birmingham than anywhere else with a total of 1,292 assaults on officers recorded in the city. The figures led West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke to renew his calls for all officers to be trained to carry Taser.

Two years after the launch of the West Midlands Police welfare van, West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Chris James, who got the initiative off the ground, reflected on its success as an essential resource for officers at major incidents, events and scenes of crime.

JULY

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



West Midlands PC Glenn Brabham was among the police officers recognised at the national Police Bravery Awards in London. Glenn rescued two elderly women from underneath an unstable car that had accidentally reversed into them last year. He and his wife, Becca, attended a Downing Street reception ahead of an evening awards ceremony. "Going inside Downing Street really was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," he said.



A West Midlands Police sergeant who died last September was among the fallen officers featured on the roll of honour at the annual Care of Police Survivors (COPS) Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire at the end of July. Sergeant Paul Frear 45, was walking to Smethwick Police Station on 21 September when he was involved in a collision with a car. Paul, who had 21 years' service, was a regular assessor of new recruits and was on a rest day but supporting the Force as part of its recruitment drive at the time.

Continued on Page 20

AUGUST



The Home Secretary could show she truly supports police officers by legislating to overturn the ruling in the case of the W80 firearms officer, said West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers. Tim welcomed both the Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, and the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, supporting the police in terms of the use of reasonable force to quell the riots and protests in recent weeks, but argued there was clear tension between their assertion of support and the reality of the vulnerability of officers when they use the powers at their disposal. "We see so many officers dragged through force conduct processes and criminal investigations for simply doing the job they have been trained to do in terms of serving and protecting their communities," he said.

The deputy chair of West Midlands Police Federation voiced concerns attacks on officers were being treated differently by the criminal justice system after the summer's civil unrest. Jase Dooley said attacks on officers carrying out their regular duties were not pursued in the same way as those on officers during the riots.



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

West Midlands Police Federation referred the Force to the Health and Safety Executive over concerns custody blocks are regularly being managed by a single sergeant. The branch's 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'.

SEPTEMBER



Officers from across the Force were 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.

Local MPs were 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, but were forced to cancel after only five MPs replied to an invitation to attend.

Branch chair Rich Cooke said the results of this year's nationwide Federation pay and morale survey will provide invaluable evidence to support the Federation's campaign for fairer police pay. Rich stressed that the more members who complete the survey, the stronger the impact would be in campaigning for improved pay and an independent pay system.



National Police Memorial Day was held in Glasgow. West Midlands Police Federation branch chair Rich Cooke was joined by Chief Constable Craig Guildford at the event which was extra poignant as West Midlands Sergeant Paul Frear was among those honoured. Paul died in September last year at the age of 45, having been involved in a road accident on his way to work.

OCTOBER

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.

Officers were urged to register for a free prostate cancer screening following a push from a Federation member. The Force had agreed for a number of PSA tests to be made available to officers to check for prostate conditions. The PSA testing event was to be held at Force Headquarters at Lloyd House in Birmingham on Monday 18 November.

A shock diagnosis of a life-threatening heart condition has enabled West Midlands Police Federation equality lead Jon Nott to get an even better



understanding of some of the issues raised with him by members. Jon said he believed living and working with the condition means he can particularly empathise with officers whose own health is affecting their careers. Around a month earlier, fellow equality lead Julie Fleming discussed her return to work after treatment for breast cancer.

NOVEMBER



West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers and deputy secretary Chris James attended a prostate screening at Force Headquarters. They joined dozens of Federation members and Assistant Chief Constable Matt Welsted at the event. The Force funded a number of Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood tests for officers to check for prostate conditions, including cancer.

Members of West Midlands Police Federation were given access to discounted rates for parking at the Euro Car Parks (ECP) site in Wolverhampton.

It was announced that the families of two fallen West Midlands Police officers would be among the first to receive the new Elizabeth Emblem. The emblem has been created to posthumously honour emergency service workers who lose their lives as a result of serving their communities. The first 38 families will be presented with the Elizabeth Emblem by His Majesty The King later this year. Among them will be the loved ones of PCs Malcolm 'Mac' Walker and Keith Dobson.



'A blood test saved my life'

A West Midlands Police Federation member encourages eligible colleagues to have a PSA test after his blood sample revealed he had prostate cancer.

A blood test for prostate cancer has been credited for saving the life of a temporary sergeant within the Force.

The PSA test led to Jason Hickman being diagnosed with prostate cancer in January 2023, just weeks after he had lost his dad and uncle to the disease.

To mark November's Men's Health Month, Jason shared his experience and hopes that doing so will encourage colleagues to get themselves checked.

Jason said: "It's really quick. For a simple blood test, I'd encourage colleagues to do it."

The 50-year-old, who is based in Coventry, explained that there were not any obvious signs he had prostate cancer before he was diagnosed.

"My wife will probably disagree with me, but I didn't think I had any real symptoms," said Jason, who has been with the Force since 2006.

"At night, when I went to the toilet, the flow wouldn't come straightaway. It would take a while to come out, but that was only at night. I put it down to being tired.

"But it wasn't, it was because my prostate was enlarged - it had compressed onto the urethra tube.

"Mine wasn't that bad where I couldn't wee, it would take a while to come through, so I didn't take any notice of it.

"It didn't even register with me my dad had similar problems. That's one of the signs - that your flow doesn't come straightaway.

"And that you need to go regularly because you're not fully emptying your bladder," he added.

Jason lost his dad, Pete, to prostate cancer in December 2022, and his Uncle Nick just two weeks later.

"I had a blood test in the January, and my PSA was through the roof," he said. "I went in for the checks, and by the May I'd had my prostate removed.

Jason Hickman.



"It was all a bit of a whirlwind. From the point of losing my dad to the point of me being diagnosed and removed, it was six months.

"I thought, what the hell is going on? I didn't have time to think. It's hard to explain because it was all such a haze. You try to think back, and it's all so surreal."

Jason said he was initially diagnosed with Stage 2 cancer.

"They said it hadn't split through the prostate but, once they removed it, they found it had started spreading," he explained.

"I am in remission now, but I am suffering some complications from the operation now. There's lots of things but, if I hadn't had it done, I would be dead - and it all stems from the PSA test."

Jason is back working again.

"I'm not on full hours," he said. "The Force has been understanding and made adjustments for me. I do a lot of agile working, so I work from home where I need to."

On 18 November, West Midlands Police

funded and hosted its first PSA testing event. The session, which was held at Force Headquarters, had limited capacity with all slots booked up within weeks of the event being first publicised.

Jason is now encouraging members who did not have a chance to attend to visit their GP to get a PSA test, rather than leave it.

Jason said: "For a two-minute blood test I would definitely recommend it. I had my blood test on the Friday, and they got back to me by the Monday and said your PSA levels are really high, you need to get a referral.

"It saved my life, and if it can save someone then that's fantastic. If you catch this early enough it does not need a major operation, which means you will not have to go through what I have gone through - and still am going through."

Anyone with a prostate can ask their doctor for a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, including men aged 50 and over, trans women and non-binary people.



Branch secretary Tim Rogers attended the event.

Fed officials at prostate screening event

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers and deputy secretary Chris James were among those who attended a prostate screening at Force Headquarters.

They joined dozens of Federation members and Assistant Chief Constable Matt Welsted for the testing event at Lloyd House on Monday (18 November).

The Force funded a number of Prostate

Specific Antigen (PSA) blood tests for officers to check for prostate conditions, including cancer.

The event, which was held during Men's Health Awareness Month, was run by the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust, and all testing slots were fully booked.

It followed [a request from Sergeant Liam Hemmings](#) that tests be made available.

Liam's request came after his dad, Junia,

and the husband of one of his team members were diagnosed with prostate cancer within a short period of time.

Both West Midlands Police and the Federation branch threw their support behind it.

Liam said: "If it can save one person, then that's absolutely brilliant."

Members who did not have a chance to attend the event are being encouraged to visit their GP to get a PSA test rather than leave it.

Anyone with a prostate can ask their doctor for a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, including men aged 50 and over, trans women and non-binary people.

“ IF IT CAN SAVE ONE PERSON, THEN THAT'S ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT. ”

Attendance Support Meetings: officers urged not to panic

Officers called into an Attendance Support Meeting (ASM) should not panic, says West Midlands Police Federation equality co-lead Julie Fleming.

Julie says Federation representatives often find themselves greeted with an email from members that says: "Help, I have been asked to go to an Attendance Support Meeting."

But, Julie explains: "Our first piece of advice is do not panic. Often the panic sets in due to a lack of understanding as to what this actually means.

"We even encounter supervisors who have been asked to hold an ASM for an officer and they aren't confident they understand what they are themselves. Officers immediately panic and, as they are already often in a vulnerable state, they fear the worst straightaway."

The Force sets annual attendance targets and uses these calculations to identify trigger points for managing attendance at work. This aims to enable the Force to identify concerns at an early stage and take supportive, and informal, action to help officers achieve improved and acceptable attendance. The trigger points are eight working days, or three occasions of absence, calculated over a rolling 12-month period. Long-term absence is recognised as one period exceeding twenty eight days.

Absence

If a particular pattern of absence is evident - including part day absence - this may also be regarded as a trigger.

ASMs are part of the informal procedure. If absence levels are equal to, or greater than the attendance triggers, a line manager may invite the member to an ASM, to discuss absences from work along with objectives, actions, support and interventions that will help

improve attendance or facilitate a return to work.

"We always advise officers to check that they are being asked to attend an ASM and that they are not facing Stage 1 of the attendance policy," says Julie. "As the ASM process aims to be supportive, it is expected that in all but exceptional circumstances contact will be made directly between the member and their line manager, however, a Federation representative or workplace colleague may facilitate discussions regarding meeting arrangements.

"Meetings will be held on Force premises where possible or alternatively at home or an alternative location. Often they are now held via Skype or Teams. The member should obtain necessary medical evidence to place a duty on the Force to implement reasonable adjustments.

If they have a Reasonable Adjustments Passport (RAP) in place this should be up to date and be highlighted.

"Meetings are not intended to imply absence is not genuine; this is a tool to support members in achieving acceptable and sustained attendance at work," Julie explained. "The approach appropriate for everyone will be considered from the outset, and throughout a period of absence to ensure that this is individual to their needs.

Occupational health

"Interventions could include referral to occupational health, exploration of reasonable adjustments, signposting, temporary restrictions or management support."

Actions agreed at an ASM will be documented in a wellbeing plan with a review period set. For short-term absences, this is usually three to six months but, with longer-term absences, they may be sooner dependant



West Midlands Police Federation equality co-lead Julie Fleming.

upon the circumstances.

If a development or wellbeing plan is initiated it must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely). Although rare, failure of this can technically result in moving to the formal stage of the Unsatisfactory Attendance Process so it is vitally important plans are suitable.

Of course, should there be further absences during the review period, or a return to work is not achieved, a further meeting will be held. A determination will be made at this point as to whether to continue with ASMs at the informal stage, or to move to the formal process.

"While this is informal and aims to be supportive, it still forms part of the attendance policy and evidence of non-attendance or a reluctance to look at resolutions will be noted and can be used in future more formal stages," Julie pointed out. "I would advise anyone faced with an ASM to contact the Federation for early support and reassurance. But, just to repeat, do not panic!"

“ AS THE ASM PROCESS AIMS TO BE SUPPORTIVE, IT IS EXPECTED THAT IN ALL BUT EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONTACT WILL BE MADE DIRECTLY BETWEEN THE MEMBER AND THEIR LINE MANAGER, HOWEVER, A FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE OR WORKPLACE COLLEAGUE MAY FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS REGARDING MEETING ARRANGEMENTS.



Charity co-founders (left to right) PC Dan Phillips, Liam Stein and PC Will Haynes.

So True! '80s icon says mental health group is Gold

Iconic '80s singer Tony Hadley has described a men's mental health group set up by a West Midlands Police Federation officer as 'Gold'.

The renowned former frontman of Spandau Ballet recorded a video championing the work of 'Back and Forth - Men's Mental Health'. Back and Forth is a walking group established by PC Dan Phillips as a tribute to his friend and colleague PC Marc Forth, who died by suicide in April 2023.

The group has gone from strength to strength since it was launched in September 2023. It gained charity status last month and now has around 1,700 members.

Now it has received [a video message from Tony](#), who enjoyed chart success with Spandau Ballet with songs such as True, Gold and Through the Barricades.

In his message, Tony said: "It's hard to talk about things sometimes. The more we talk about it the better we are going to feel about it. It's not going to cure everything, but at least you'll find like-minded guys that maybe have similar problems. Back and Forth. It's a great organisation."

Dan explained how the message came about.

"The wife of Jon Barrett, one of our

founders, is part of the Tony Handley fan club," he said. "They saw him perform and afterwards managed to speak to him, and told him what we do.

"I think he may have had some mental issues himself and I think he's got a family member in the police. They asked him if he would record a message of support, and when he sent it through it took us by surprise. To get something like that is massive for us.

"To have that kind of endorsement and support from someone like that is amazing - you could say it's Gold - and we're thankful for it."

The group has also been tasked with restoring the garden space at Chase Avenue Police Station in Willenhall, Coventry.

Dan said: "Chief Superintendent Paul Drover has asked us to look at it and return it to use for a memorial space and a quiet space. We have a bunch of volunteers who will help out over the winter and get it back to a usable space, so we've got a quiet area and a memorial garden for all our fallen colleagues.

"For many people, gardening is good for their relaxation and mental health. I'm going to change some of the walks for work on the garden over the winter to get it ready for the spring."



Spandau Ballet frontman Tony Hadley.

The group has recently started recording podcasts discussing men's mental health issues.

Dan said: "It's not a counselling session. It's a couple of blokes chatting about whatever issues they've been dealing with. We have a topic each week, and we discuss how we dealt with things and what we've taken away from them."

Back & Forth: A Men's Mental Health Podcast is available to download now.

Change of shift or shift pattern

In the latest in a series of features putting the focus on Police Regulations, we answer common questions about changes to shifts or shift patterns.

With the Christmas and New Year period fast-approaching, we are also re-publishing questions – and answers – about Bank Holiday working.

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

Q I am being told my shift/shift pattern is being changed, is that allowed?

A You should be given at least 90 days' notice of a change to your shift. Unless there is an exigency of duty which necessitates a change of shift with less than 90 days' notice. Any changes to shifts inside of 90 days where there is no exigency of duty are purely voluntary. However, we would encourage members to be flexible where possible.

The term 'exigencies of duty', should be interpreted as relating to situations where a pressing demand, need or requirement is perceived that is not reasonably avoidable and necessitates a change of shift. In this context the word, pressing, relates to the expected situation at the time when the duty is to be performed rather than the time when the shift is changed, ie the reasons for a change may be known many months in advance but may still be pressing.

When a shift is changed, consideration

should be given to the shifts either side to ensure you are given the requisite 11 hours of rest.

Please note: The regulations do not require rosters to be published for inspectors or above. They also do not benefit from a required notice period for changes of duty.

Q I was told I had to start my shift earlier than scheduled, what can I claim?

A You are only required to start early if there is an exigency of duty, unless you have been given 90 days' notice.

- If your new start time is eight hours or less from the time you are informed and is advanced into a day you have already worked. Then you are not only entitled to over-time for the hours you start early but this also counts towards your tour of duty for that day. If you are then retained on duty for more than the number of hours you were due to work then the regulations

around extended hours apply

- If you are given more than eight hours' notice of the duty change then your working day merely starts at the new time. If the time you are brought on at is before 7am following a period of rest days then you will be eligible to claim a minimum of four hours' payment or TOIL (your choice) at time and a half.

Q I applied for a promotion/new role, am I still entitled to 90 days' notice?

A As the change of shift pattern is something you would have known about during the process, you are not entitled to 90 days' notice. However, we would always advise a reasonable notice period to allow the individual to make suitable arrangements.

For further information please refer to:

[Annex E - Duty](#)
[New shift pattern checklist](#)

Bank Holiday working

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

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

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

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

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

A If you are required to remain at work past 07:00 after a night shift, going into a Bank Holiday you are entitled to claim a minimum of four hours' payment or TOIL (your choice) at double time, even if you work less than four hours.

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

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

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

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

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

Public holiday leave is the same for all officers and is pro rata. This means that a full-time officer gets the full statutory eight hours public holiday leave for that day. If you were rostered for a shift that exceeds eight hours then you owe the Force the remaining hours. This is because leave is calculated in hours and not days as this is the fairest way to do it. The same way that an RDIL is worth eight hours so if you use it for a day that is over eight hours you have to make up the difference.

When the shift pattern is drawn up the Bank Holidays will be overlaid onto the roster so if the Bank Holiday falls on a day when you are rostered to work a nine-hour shift you will have to work the extra hour somewhere else to make your total hours back up to 2,016.

This is not something the Federation has agreed to it is simply the case that the Force now has the software (GRS) to ensure that officers work the hours they are contracted to work.

A concession the Federation was able to negotiate with the Force with regard to how they would implement this new policy was

that officers could have negative TOIL balances and that these could be worked back as 'pre-planned' over-time so they would not be subject to the 30-minute deductions that would otherwise apply.

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

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

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





GeorgeBurrows

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*Terms and conditions apply. Full details of the cover including exclusions and limitations can be found in the policy wording, which is available from the Federation.

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Best Doctors scheme gives access to expert medical opinion

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 Best Doctors service included with the policy.

The Best Doctors service provides the reassurance of a confidential expert second medical opinion if a member, partner or their resident dependent children up to age 21 (25 if still in full time education) are facing a worrying medical condition.

The scheme works in conjunction with the patient and their doctor to ensure diagnosis and treatment are correct, providing an independent and comprehensive assessment report. It works with a worldwide panel of specialists.

Unlimited access to the Member Care centre is included, providing a confidential telephone-based helpline, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the year.

If you are a subscribing member of the West Midlands Police Federation Group Insurance please call: **0800 085 6605** for Best Doctors medical support.

Or visit the [Best Doctors website](#) for healthcare advice and the Best Doctors video library, with more than 300 colour videos giving detailed explanations about medical conditions, treatments and testing.

Note: Best Doctors services are not available in respect of mental health related conditions.

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Praise for scheme

One member who has used the Best Doctors service is West Midlands Police Federation branch secretary Tim Rogers.

He consulted the scheme for a second opinion on his treatment for coeliac disease and Barrett's oesophagus, particularly in relation to the long-term use of the medication he was prescribed to help with these conditions.

"Having contacted Best Doctors, I was given access to triage doctors, asked about my concerns and then after more detailed

discussions, I received a full report within around six weeks," says Tim.

"Ultimately, they were in agreement with the treatment I was receiving, but it was just reassuring to have that second opinion and to know that my consultant's notes had been assessed from a different medical perspective. It gives you confidence that you are receiving the best treatment."

Tim also sought an opinion on whether a hernia that he has had since he was 19 should be operated on after getting little advice from the NHS. He was advised not to have an operation.



David's story: The impact of asbestos

Mesothelioma is a form of cancer which can occur along the inner surface of the chest wall and is caused by breathing in asbestos dust. The development of mesothelioma can take up to 40 years which is why most don't experience symptoms until it is too late.

Our Client, David Smith* didn't begin experiencing symptoms of an asbestos related disease until 20 years into his retirement.

David joined the police as a young cadet and qualified as a police officer a few years later. He soon rose through the ranks and became a superintendent. During his retirement, he was a full-time carer to his wife who suffered from severe arthritis that affected her mobility.

He visited his GP who referred him for tests, and it was discovered that David had mesothelioma. Whilst being devastated, David was also confused as he was unsure on where he could have been exposed to asbestos.

As David's condition worsened, he suffered from loss of appetite, weight loss, side-effects from prolonged treatment as well as the mental stress of his fatal condition and not being able to care for his wife. It was during this time that David contacted Slater and Gordon's specialist asbestos team.

After a thorough preliminary investigation, it was discovered David had been exposed to asbestos when retrieving boxes of files stored in

basements near to boiler rooms of the various police stations where he worked. He had also been exposed when supervising riot training, undertaken twice a year at former Ministry of Defence buildings. Due to the use of flash bangs and other riot simulation, asbestos dust was released into the air, which unfortunately was inhaled by David.

Our expert solicitors fought on behalf of David and arranged for him to receive funding for private treatment for his mesothelioma. Our team were to be able to negotiate a six-figure settlement for David, which not only gave him and his family peace of mind and financial security but secured the all-important funding for private treatment.

Your employer has a duty of care to you as an employee and must protect you from any health risks in the workplace. If your employment has caused you to develop an illness, then you may be able to claim industrial disease compensation.

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Fed officials welcome meeting with Coventry MP

Coventry East MP Mary Creagh has met with officials from West Midlands Police Federation to discuss their current concerns.

The Labour MP, who is under-secretary of state at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, listened to their concerns and offered advice on how they could further their campaigns.

"We are grateful to Mary for taking the time to meet with us," says Tim Rogers,

secretary of West Midlands Police Federation.

"Mary was supportive of our campaign for an appropriate police pay review mechanism, giving us some options re the legislative vehicle needed that we may use and also provided some useful contacts who are working on the Employment Rights Act."

The meeting came about after the Federation wrote to all the MPs elected for the West Midlands region within weeks of the July General Election asking to meet with them.



Coventry East MP Mary Creagh.

But the Federation has been frustrated that only a handful have responded.

"So far, we have only managed to meet with two of them, which is hugely disappointing. Time and time again members of the public will say that law and order are important to them and yet their elected representatives in Parliament don't seem to see policing as a priority," says Tim.

"As a Federation, we are the voice of West Midlands Police's constables, sergeants, inspectors and chief inspectors, as well as members of the Special Constabulary.

"Policing is in crisis. We are campaigning for industrial rights, including collective bargaining, as our members are completely disillusioned with our current pay review body which is neither fair nor independent.

"We are also struggling to retain officers and that is having an impact on the quality of the policing service we can provide."

Branch chair Rich Cooke added: "We want to talk to our MPs about our concerns and the ideas we have for addressing them, but we also want to hear what they have to say, and what support they can offer to the hard-working officers who day in, day out, put their lives on the line as they seek to serve and protect the public.

"We have now written to our MPs three times and while a few more have come back to us to try to arrange a meeting the vast majority have not even bothered to acknowledge our emails, which I think is very poor to say the least."

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Our experts:

To speak to a specialist member of our team, please call Amy, Mark or Clare for an initial chat:



Amy Brown
Apprentice Chartered Legal Executive
✉ amy.brown@irwinmitchell.com
☎ +44 (0)7407 796 625



Mark Hands
Partner
✉ mark.hands@irwinmitchell.com
☎ +44 (0)7801 981 795



Clare Wiseman
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Helen Taylor.

Coventry Police Museum: a new home for city's policing heritage

Federation members have been invited to visit Coventry Police Museum after its move to a new permanent home.

The city has had its own police museum since 1957, when it was established within the basement of Coventry Central Police Station.

When this original location closed in 2020, the museum was restored the following year as a temporary 'pop-up' site on Hertford Street as part of Coventry's new status as a UK City of Culture.

During this period, Helen Taylor joined efforts to oversee the museum's care, becoming manager in February 2021.

Since then, tireless work has got into sourcing a location for a permanent exhibition once more and this has now materialised with a site at Coventry Council House on Earl Street.

The newly-housed museum opened its doors on 4 September, being officially opened in a ceremony attended by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster and West Midlands Police Chief Constable Craig Guildford.

Helen said: "I am over the moon that the museum will live on in a forever home. It's what Coventry deserves with its strong policing identity and history. The city has always seen itself as its own separate force despite amalgamating with Birmingham as West Midlands Police in 1974.

"We are very grateful for what we had at

Hertford Street but it was only ever a temporary solution – the building we were in is due to be demolished.

"Our new home is very much welcomed because, for a while, we didn't know what was going to happen. All that worry and doubt is gone now, and we are all very happy."

Corrine Brazier, heritage manager of West Midlands Police Museum, which itself re-opened for good following uncertainty around its existence two years ago, was instrumental in securing a permanent location.

"Corrine reached out to Coventry Council to get the discussions going on a new home. She deserves a lot of credit because I think she has been a great leader in making sure the museum was never given up on," Helen continued.

"As its sister site, I hope we can follow the success of West Midlands Police Museum and welcome many visitors over the coming months and years."

Helen, whose extensive background in managing historical exhibitions includes the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, went on to praise the staff breathing new life into the Police Museum.

Aside from the 37-year-old, the team responsible for the day-to-day running of the premises are made up entirely of volunteers – many of whom are retired Coventry Police officers.

"Our team is small but mighty. They're the

people who are allowing Coventry's amazing history in policing to be shared with the public and, as a result, ensuring that heritage survives," she explained.

"They give up their own free time to show their commitment to the profession, even after giving so much already during their careers, to guide our guests through content, answer questions and tell stories from their service in the Force."

Visitors can also expect to see exclusive displays of the death mask of Mary Ball, the last woman to be publicly hanged in the city, and of Mohammed Daar, the Coventry cop who became the first Asian police officer in the country, as well as much more interesting detail on nearly 200 years of policing history.

The museum, located on the ground floor of the Council House, is currently open on Thursdays and Friday from 10am to 2pm, with admission free for all.

"It is a pleasure to welcome all of our visitors as the museum starts this new chapter, and we would always be excited to have serving police officers pay us a visit," said Helen.

"I would encourage Federation members to come down, perhaps bring their children along for some discovery time, and get lost in the history of the job they dedicate themselves to.

"Whether you have a connection to Coventry or the wider West Midlands and even beyond, I'm sure there will be something that fascinates and captures the imagination of everyone."

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Who can forget the Great British spirit shown by our guests during a very wet and soggy anniversary party in August?

We also ran our special anniversary prize draw, where lucky members won a selection of fabulous prizes throughout the year.

As our commemorative year draws to a close, we want to thank all our members for their incredible support over the years. We would not be celebrating the Benevolent Fund's achievements without you and we certainly couldn't provide the essential help and assistance that we do without membership subscriptions.

Don't forget, our holiday home ballot will be opening again in the New Year. Full details can be found on our [website](#).

Thank you for celebrating with us in 2024, we can't wait to continue the journey with you in 2025!

I'd like to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

John Williams, charity chairman



MEMBER BENEFITS

Here's a recap of the membership benefits with West Midlands Police Benevolent Fund.

All members:

- Access to Interest-free loans and grants in times of hardship or distress
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- Discounted holidays at the fund's holiday properties

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