

FEDLINE



POLICE FEDERATION CONFERENCE 2021



Speaking up for Cambridgeshire's Federated ranks



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View from the chair

By **Liz Groom**, chair of Cambridgeshire Police Federation



For three years now, we have not been able to stage our annual national conference in the usual way.

A cyber-attack and then the pandemic put paid to the conferences in 2019 and 2020 and, of course, with ongoing restrictions, this year we were faced with the stark choice of either no conference or a virtual event.

Sadly, these circumstances have resulted in us not being able to challenge the Home Secretary and, in effect, the Government in the way that we have in the past. Nor have we been able to question other key decision-makers in policing – Sir Tom Winsor, the head of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and others.

This has served to stifle meaningful debate and this year's conference was just a bit staid despite the fact that the content was good and relevant.

As ever, some sessions were better than others. I felt the session on pay, conditions and pensions was particularly lacking. It's one of the biggest issues affecting our members right now. Many simply have no idea of the figures they need to make life choices. This is totally unacceptable and the Federation must push this with some vigour now.

Similarly, the Home Secretary's speech was mediocre. It was OK but gave us nothing. There were no big announcements, just warm

words about having our backs. This is welcome but news of a pay rise would have been better.

To highlight some positives, national chair John Apter was passionate and gave a good speech.

The input from Tim Rogers, the Federation's response driving and driver training lead, about the changes to legislation to better protect police drivers was also good. This reform, which will see police drivers' training and expertise taken into account in law, is long overdue.

I represented and supported an officer who went to court - and faced gross misconduct allegations - for dangerous driving. He was found not guilty at court but resigned as he felt the Force had not supported him and had actually hung him out to dry. So this is particularly close to my heart. Seeing him go through such an experience for over two years was dreadful. We lost a good officer and, worst of all, the suspect he was pursuing got away Scot-free.

In terms of conference, the best bit for me was the tribute to the bravery awards nominees. I love Mark Durden-Smith, who hosts the awards ceremony. He is hilarious and makes it human. He gets police humour too. The stories are so humbling and I am in awe of the nominees.

I'm so proud when I see the stories and when I attend the event with our nominees I always have a tear in my eye when I drop them at Downing Street. Makes me proud to be a police officer.

Overall, I hope we can have an in-person conference next year to get reps more engaged and be able to better challenge the speakers.

Catch up on the Federation conference

Keynote speeches, panel discussions and round table sessions from the Police Federation annual conference are all now available to watch online through a special video on-demand service.

Highlights include the opening address from Prime Minister Boris Johnson, keynote speeches by Home Secretary Priti Patel and Federation chair John Apter plus award presentations and important sessions on the use of force, policing at protests, misogyny and diversity within the service.

The theme of this year's conference was Policing Under Pressure and the event provided some fascinating insights into the fresh challenges faced by frontline officers as the country emerges from an unprecedented period of national lockdown.

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom said: "This year's virtual conference was a great success and covered a wide range of key issues faced by police officers today.

"I would encourage any members who were unable to tune in to the live sessions to catch up with the speeches and debates."

To access the on-demand videos, please simply email events@polfed.org and you will be sent a link.

Secretary's overview of conference 2021

By **Scott Houghton**,
secretary of
Cambridgeshire Police
Federation



Well, there were more than 1,000 delegates on the virtual conference site so there were obviously going to be a few issues. Those unfortunately meant we missed the opening from national chair John Apter and Prime Minister Boris Johnson because our video kept freezing.

The problems were ironed out fairly quickly though and I thought overall it was a good event, with a lot packed in and Ian Collins doing a really good job facilitating, as usual.

The Policing Under Pressure session was good but policing minister Kit Malthouse was more worried about the Government's performance than how policing has been affected. I think he should have been pressed more around vaccinations and, having missed out this year, he should be making sure officers get timely boosters next year.

National chair John Apter and Home Secretary Priti Patel both spoke very well and, I have to say, I really do like her but her warm words mean nothing if they're not met with action. Officers want the vaccine to protect them as they protect our nation and they want fair pay for their hard work.

It was clear in the Q & A session after their speeches that John and Ms Patel have built up a good relationship which is great but we do need to see some positives coming from that relationship and I am not seeing too much in the way of positive action for policing yet.

I enjoyed seeing the Women in Policing Award go to a very good candidate but I wondered if maybe, as with the bravery awards, we could have had the other nominees on the screen. This is a growth area

and our Force didn't present a candidate this year which is disappointing. We will do all we can to make sure we do next time as we have some fantastic women worthy of the award in Cambridgeshire.

The Bravest of the Brave section with Matt Durden-Smith was, as always, a glowing part of the conference that makes your hairs stand up and makes you proud to be a police officer. We saw some real acts of extreme bravery and those officers are an absolute credit to us all.

On the flip side, I'm not sure how I felt about the Pay, Conditions and Pensions session with general secretary Alex Duncan and deputy secretary John Partington, if I'm honest. They were very candid but they stressed how our negotiating rights have been eroded and how that has impacted on us all.

I feel this is something we need to be more pro-active on at next year's conference, with a message to our members that we can have a positive impact. We have a year to really get that rolling forward and not just lay down and accept what is thrown at us.

The round table pensions remedy with vice-chair Ché Donald and Alex was all very useful and we have the Cambridgeshire pension roadshow on 29 June.

Day 2 of conference and two auditoriums meant there were some difficult choices to make as all the sessions would be potentially very useful.

Use of Force with Steve Hartshorn, Federation firearms and less lethal lead, served as a great reminder of the implications of the W80 case and how the job of a police officer is becoming more and more difficult and Investing in Investigators was an interesting session. I was really impressed with Deputy Chief Constable Jason Hogg and Detective Chief Superintendent Martin Brunning from the Beds, Cambs and Herts Major Crime Unit and their honesty and conviction. Locally, we are 52 Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) 2 under strength so I

welcome the toolkit that will soon be available and Mr Hogg's push to get a decent system for court files as the one we have is not fit for purpose.

Police Recruitment During The Pandemic showed the difficulty of recruiting and retaining officers and this could become a very real issue as we move forward. Similarly, The Challenge of Difference was a good session. Professor Robert Beckford spoke very well but if I'm honest I didn't really understand the concept he was trying to get across. That is more likely to be my lack of understanding than his explanation, though.

New Regs – New Culture was great but we need to start benchmarking. We know we (hopefully) have a conference in 12 months, so where are we now? And where will we be in 12 months' time? It is important that we can see how we have improved. But we embraced the new regs and if we haven't, that needs taking into account. In terms of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) timescales, anyone would say they have improved, but we could do with some proof around this as I am not seeing it from a local perspective with a misconduct investigation of nine months to a 'no case to answer' and two investigations that are over 12 months old which can't be right if we are embracing the new regs.

Wellbeing was a very informative session. I know the team at the Federation's headquarters at Leatherhead are doing a great job and this is as important as pay and conditions for me as the workforce has never been under as much pressure as it is now. We really do need to hold our own forces to account for officer welfare and wellbeing and I certainly made this clear to our force in our STRA last week.

As I said, this was a good conference in all. There are quite a few sessions I need to catch up on but well done to all involved; after a shaky start it worked well and I look forward to an in-person conference next year... fingers crossed.

PM's 'huge thank you' to officers

Boris Johnson delivered a message of thanks and support at the opening of the conference.

The Prime Minister issued a 'huge thank you' to officers for their work during the pandemic and praised them for rising "to an enormous challenge".

In a recorded message, he said: "Just as I could never have imagined being forced to close pubs and bars and restaurants or tell people how many households could get together, I bet that policing restrictions in that way was not something you ever dreamt you would be doing.

"But you did it because you knew it was how we were going to protect the NHS and save lives."

He added: "You have shown over the past year just why British police are the best in the world, now we are going to make sure you have the tools you need to deal with criminals, make our streets safer, and get on with the job you signed up to do."



Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Chair reflects on challenging year

Police Federation chair John Apter has reflected on an extraordinary year in his keynote speech to this year's annual conference.

John said officers found themselves in unprecedented situations and often felt they were held responsible when things went wrong.

He noted assaults on officers shot up during the coronavirus pandemic as they became the focus of public anger and frustration.

The chair told members: "This past year has been one of the most challenging and one of the most extraordinary for us all in recent history.

"For the past 15 months we have been required to police in a way that none of us ever expected to when we joined the job.

“ THIS PAST YEAR HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING AND ONE OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY FOR US ALL IN RECENT HISTORY. ”

"We knew it was never going to be easy. But our job was made even harder by the ever changing rules and regulations."

He told Home Secretary Priti Patel, who also addressed the conference: "We had officers going out on patrol literally hours after the new regulations were introduced.

"They had often received no detailed briefing because the laws had only just been passed, which meant they were often going out on patrol with no specific detail about what the change meant for policing.

"There was no discussion about how to deal with the new laws or the new guidance. And let's be honest Home Secretary, the rules were not always crystal clear."

He said the police had unfairly become the focus of blame: "My colleagues, who were doing their very best, every single day,



National Police Federation chair John Apter.

in the most difficult of circumstances, became the focus of public anger and frustration.

"And for some perverse reason, some chose to see us as the enemy. We were labelled the villains of the pandemic and that is grossly unfair.

"A minority of people - and let's be honest about this: often agitators intent on causing mayhem - focused their anger and often violence on police officers.

"Well, I have a message to those who goaded my colleagues, a message to those who attacked police officers who were simply doing their job and to those vile people who weaponised Covid by coughing and spitting at my colleagues, often saying they had Covid and they hope the officer caught it and died.

"To those individuals: you disgust me, you completely disgust me. And I know that you

disgust every decent, law-abiding person."

John said officers were also facing 'trial by media' on a daily basis and called on the Home Secretary for her support, he said: "We need you to speak out when you see footage of police officers being attacked on social media. When we see people reaching for their phone, not to dial 999 for help, but reaching for their phone to film an attack for nothing more than entertainment.

"Social media companies must also take more responsibility and the Government must ensure this happens. What kind of society have we become when attacking police officers is seen as nothing more than entertainment, nothing more than a sport?"

John finished his keynote speech by pointing out that police pay had fallen by 18 per cent in real terms in the past 10 years and that most officers were also currently affected by the public sector pay freeze.

“ WE KNEW IT WAS NEVER GOING TO BE EASY. BUT OUR JOB WAS MADE EVEN HARDER BY THE EVER CHANGING RULES AND REGULATIONS. ”

Home Secretary praises officers and says 'I have got your backs'

Home Secretary Priti Patel has told Police Federation members the country depends on them and pledged: "I have got your backs."

In her keynote speech, the Home Secretary praised the courage shown by frontline officers throughout the coronavirus crisis.

She told them: "On behalf of the whole country, thank you for still being there for us during one of the toughest moments in our country's history. You have done it superbly well and courageously."

Ms Patel acknowledged a rise in the number of attacks on officers as protests swept the country last summer and described such behaviour as "grotesque".

She said: "It's a cruel irony that while most crimes naturally fell during lockdown, violence and abuse directed at police officers increased."

“ ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY, THANK YOU FOR STILL BEING THERE FOR US DURING ONE OF THE TOUGHEST MOMENTS IN OUR COUNTRY'S HISTORY. YOU HAVE DONE IT SUPERBLY WELL AND COURAGEOUSLY. ”

"You were spat and coughed at by thugs claiming to have the virus. Some of you were seriously injured and your vans were set on fire during the despicable events in Bristol earlier this year.

"Police were bloodied and pelted with bottles in Hyde Park in April."

Assaults on constables without injury increased by 21 per cent to 25,156 in the year to December 2020 and attacks resulting in injury rose by 2 per cent to more than 11,000, figures branded 'shocking' by the Home Secretary.

She said: "This behaviour is grotesque. And I will never accept that it's simply part of the job.



Home Secretary Priti Patel.

"It is an attack on the fabric of our society. And every police uniform is worn by a human being who is entitled to dignity and respect.

"The right to protest and speak freely does not include the right to smash up property, or abuse police officers."

Ms Patel confirmed the Government was doubling the maximum prison sentence for common assault or battery against emergency workers from twelve months to two years.

She said: "I will continue to do everything in my power to ensure assaults on our police are treated with the appropriate severity across the whole criminal justice system.

"Those who have contempt for the police may be louder and more vitriolic than ever, but they are vastly outnumbered and utterly wrong.

"Far from feeling any shame in being a police officer, you all should feel very proud indeed. We have also acted in response to what you said about the tools and powers you need."

Ms Patel insisted she would not let the police be subjected to trial by social media and said she supported calls to release more body-worn video footage of incidents.

She told the conference: "That's why I backed the Police Federation's call for forces to share body-worn video footage to counter highly selective, and misleading, video clips uploaded on to social media.

"I want forces to be more proactive in sharing body-worn video footage to highlight the fantastic work of their officers,

to build public confidence, and to correct harmful misinformation circulating online.

"It is critical that we work as a system to ensure that we maintain public confidence in policing, which is vital for victim reporting, intelligence-led policing, and to maintain our treasured model of policing by consent.

"As part of this process, we will be looking carefully at strengthening the system of local community scrutiny and the value of body-worn video, because transparency is vital."

Ms Patel said the police had played a heroic role bringing the country through the incredible shock of the coronavirus pandemic.

She told Federation members: "As we come out of coronavirus, we must cut crime and build back safer – and we can't do it without you."

She concluded: "Our country depends on you. And I have got your backs."

Our reps say...

"I thought the keynote speeches were very good all round. I thought the Home Secretary conducted herself well and showed support for the police as a whole. She explained everything that was asked with justification." **Jamie Plant**

"Despite the support from the Home Secretary, the police minister and the Federation for 'jabs for cops', the Government refused to extend it to officers.

"Warm words of support and appreciation from the Home Secretary but this did not translate into anything tangible or a declaration of support for the police in relation to pay or conditions." **Matt Ward**

"The Home Secretary wanted to tell us what she thought we would ask her but missed the mark completely as we wanted to know about pay and conditions and how the Government will protect us for doing the job, including protection for police pursuits and all forces prioritising the training of Taser officers. I would have liked to have seen more about how the Home Office will support officers by funding constabularies better." **Tudor Treharne**

Q and A with Home Secretary



National chair John Apter and Home Secretary Priti Patel.

Following the keynote speeches from national chair John Apter and Home Secretary Priti Patel, facilitator Ian Collins remarked on the good working relationship the two appeared to enjoy.

John said: "Our dialogue is positive and open but I don't sugar-coat anything. That works both ways though and I'm often on the naughty step."

The Q & A session that followed their addresses prompted numerous questions.

Ken Marsh, chair of the Metropolitan Police Federation, said colleagues had been forced to 'beg, borrow or steal' vaccinations and were treated with contempt, particularly when vaccinations were being offered to anyone in high infection rate areas this week.

Ms Patel said she did not recognise his statement, adding: "The Government worked with the committee (the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation) and followed their advice. That's not about letting people down. This time last year people were dying and the elderly and vulnerable were in desperate need so the committee was having to make life and death decisions. Officers are now being vaccinated and are covered by the cohorting and age ranges and the vaccination programme has been phenomenal."

John added: "I felt so let down on behalf of my colleagues. When I had the Home Secretary and chief constables supporting me on getting them vaccinated, I was hopeful. So I felt shattered when it didn't turn into the decision my colleagues wanted."

Another question from the Met was around the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and its lack of accountability.

The Home Secretary said the IOPC is 'absolutely' accountable to her. She said: "I meet and work with them and we have

made great strides. I have told them this end-to-end approach and putting officers' lives on hold is unacceptable and as a result they have changed their practice. But I need to hear from the frontline because if we need to do more, we will."

John said more improvement was still needed, adding: "The IOPC have done well but they must do better. For us, they are on probation."

Another Metropolitan Police question was around police forces being representative of 'the diverse multinational society' of the UK and the Home Secretary responded by saying she was 'really proud of

applicants: "I do want to encourage more people to come to policing later in life because they have the experience that will benefit policing at all levels and in different ways and as crime changes, policing must change. There are changes being made at the college and it's also about how we invest in officers," she said.

John added: "We changed the way we recruited and attracted and I do think the messaging was wrong from the college because it definitely put people who were more mature off. I want to see more mature people coming in but while recruitment is important, retention is as important. We've

“ OUR DIALOGUE IS POSITIVE AND OPEN BUT I DON'T SUGAR-COAT ANYTHING. THAT WORKS BOTH WAYS THOUGH AND I'M OFTEN ON THE NAUGHTY STEP. ”

the work around diversity and outreach that takes place in policing'.

She also said: "We have over 10,000 police officers now, so around seven per cent overall, that represent very diverse communities and that figure is going up. But it's not just about campaigns, it's about engagement and outreach and how you demonstrate that policing could be a fantastic career."

A slightly different diversity question came from a Sussex officer who joined at the age of 39. He asked the Home Secretary if she thought the low starting salary meant the job was unappealing to older candidates who 'could bring a great deal of life experience to the job'.

She said it was skills and experience and life experience that informed the professional judgement of police officers and that she wanted to encourage more older

got to try to harness those people with the skills they've developed over many years."

As the session came to an end, the Home Secretary was asked if she had an over-riding final message. She said: "There's a lot I could say but primarily it's enormous thanks and gratitude for the public service our officers give and have shown over the last 12 months."

"Policing has been front and centre throughout and policing has helped stop the spread of the virus and it has helped to save lives so thanks to everybody who has been out there."

"We know we've got new challenges as we come out of lockdown but from my perspective that's about backing the police and giving officers all the support they need to get on and do their job. And we are committed to making sure the lowest paid absolutely do get a pay rise."

Police minister says service is coming out of the pandemic in better shape than it went in

Policing minister Kit Malthouse has acknowledged the pressure the police found themselves under at the height of the coronavirus crisis but insisted they have always enjoyed the full support of the Government and the vast majority of the public.

Mr Malthouse said he stood 'square-shouldered' with frontline officers who had been asked to carry out their normal duties while also policing lockdown restrictions with great courage and professionalism.

And he told conference that, despite the unprecedented challenges of the last 18 months, officers had managed to maintain and had probably improved public trust during the pandemic.

He said: "Policing is coming out of the pandemic in better shape than it went in."

The minister admitted he regretted not doing more to ensure police officers were prioritised in the Covid vaccine programme.

Asked why the Government did not place more pressure on the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to prioritise officers, he told a virtual panel discussion: "We made the case strongly about police officers. We did repeatedly make the case and make the request but obviously the JCVI made the decision that they did."

"From my point of view, it's a point of regret that we didn't manage to make our point strongly enough."



Policing minister Kit Malthouse.

"Having said that, as was said earlier, quite a number of officers managed to get vaccinated with spare vaccines, hopefully now everybody is done or will be done shortly."

The opening session of conference, the theme of which was Policing Under Pressure, saw a live panel featuring Mr Malthouse, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) chair Martin Hewitt, shadow policing minister Sarah Jones and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary Sir Tom Winsor.

Mr Hewitt praised the response of police officers but admitted frequent changes in legislation had presented extraordinary

challenges for both the police service and the Government.

Labour MP Ms Jones accused ministers of failing to properly support the police as they were forced to adapt to frequent changes to legislation during the three national lockdowns.

Sir Tom paid tribute to the police response during the pandemic and dismissed social media criticism of how officers had handled the ever-changing landscape during lockdown.

He said while not perfect, the police performance had been "very, very good" and deserved high marks of nine out of 10.

Our reps say...

"Sir Tom Winsor gave high praise as to how policing has dealt with the pandemic and MP Kit Malthouse also gave overwhelming support for the police for what we have done during the last year. He said he lobbied hard to get all police officers vaccinated but the decision was to focus on the most vulnerable in the community. It was nice to hear but not backed up with much about supporting frontline officers." **Tudor Treharne**

"Tom Winsor rightly recognised the achievements of the police during the pandemic." **Matt Ward**

'This award is really for victims who are still suffering'

A former victim of domestic violence has received the Outstanding Contribution to Women in Policing Award 2021 having shared her own experience to help others.

Chief Inspector Sharon Baker of Avon and Somerset Police said she was accepting the award on behalf of all the victims who were still suffering.

"I hope this award shines the light on the darkness and shows you that you're not alone," she added.

CI Baker clinched the title for her outstanding work around domestic violence, including a powerful video she made sharing her own story of living in a controlling and abusive relationship.

She said victims of domestic abuse were everywhere.



Chief Inspector Sharon Baker.

"There's no them, there's only us. They are our crew mates, our bosses and the people on the other end of the phone. This award is really for the victims who are still suffering."

Brave officers honoured

The Police Bravery Awards 2020 ceremony was postponed due to the ongoing pandemic but is hopefully set to take place later this year.

TV's Mark Durden-Smith, who presents the annual awards ceremony, led a session honouring all nominees.

"Every year, we hear about the awe-inspiring actions of these officers," he said, "These awards are a chance to give these people a deserved pat on the back, to honour the bravest men and women who serve our communities."

The 2020 ceremony is hopefully taking place in October with the 2021 ceremony scheduled for December.

Pay, conditions and pensions: 'We need to get our message out more'

The Federation has to be the unequivocal voice of policing, getting its message out more and rallying together, the Federation's national secretary told a conference session looking at pay, conditions and pensions.

The session was facilitated by Tony Blair's former spokesperson, Alastair Campbell, who recently appeared as a host on the breakfast TV programme Good Morning Britain, and featured inputs from Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) national secretary Alex Duncan and deputy secretary John Partington.

"As we come out of the pandemic and we return to normality, I think it's beholding on PFEW to be the unequivocal voice of policing. We need to get our message out more – we will all have different opinions, but it's important we rally together," Alex said.

John added: "We have to realise how powerful we can be when we come together with a united front."

Time was spent discussing the uncertainty around pensions with Alex explaining there were officers who did not know when they could retire, what they are entitled to and had no pension forecast.

But he said the Federation was working with the Government and further guidance was imminent, including a pension calculator tool that was being tested.

Asked why the issues had not been resolved by Government, Alex conceded: "I think they want to resolve it but it is incredibly complex."

And he also stressed that he understood why members were frustrated, particularly since some officers were leaving policing on the wrong pension, something that could not be resolved until the Government issued its guidance on the remedy to the



Session facilitator Alastair Campbell and (inset) PFEW national secretary Alex Duncan.

discrimination found in the introduction of the 2015 pension scheme.

Moving on from pensions, both Alex and John were critical of the fact that the Federation had lost negotiating rights in the pay review process, with the Government also being free not to abide by the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) to which the Federation made a submission each year.

Alex added that the Federation's role was being wrongly diminished by the refusal of Government to allow any appeal or arbitration when the annual pay claim is assessed by PRRB.

Our reps say...

"Informative but still a minefield."

Jamie Plant

"There was no real update from the national secretary in relation to pensions. The Government is taking its time over the resolutions for those who are affected with an implementation date of April 2022. There are also no accurate forecasts for those that are part-time but a rough calculation can be made on your current salary on the XPS administration site but, unfortunately, it does not reflect if you are topping up your pension each month. The feeling is that the national Federation does not have any appetite to challenge the Government in any way about pay or conditions.

"There was nothing raised that gives me confidence that the Federation is able to influence effectively and have suitable remedies in place to hold the Government to account as it continues to affect our pay and conditions in the future. Apart from legal cover and very committed local reps what is the purpose of the national Federation?" **Tudor Treharne**

“ AS WE COME OUT OF THE PANDEMIC AND WE RETURN TO NORMALITY, I THINK IT'S BEHOLDING ON PFEW TO BE THE UNEQUIVOCAL VOICE OF POLICING. WE NEED TO GET OUR MESSAGE OUT MORE – WE WILL ALL HAVE DIFFERENT OPINIONS, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT WE RALLY TOGETHER. ”

Understanding misogyny in policing



Zoë Wakefield, chair of the Federation's national women's group.

Jokes about gender are as unacceptable as those about race and sexuality, the annual Police Federation conference was told.

The pervasive nature of misogyny came under the spotlight in a session hosted by the Federation's self-organised national women's group.

Members heard how female officers still faced discrimination at work with group chair Zoë Wakefield giving examples

of abusive social media messages she and others had received.

Zoë told the session that women often received negative comments from male colleagues about their fitness for the job.

National Police Chiefs' Council gender lead and Derbyshire Chief Constable Rachel Swann said misogynistic comments were too often dismissed as 'banter' which was no longer acceptable.

She said: "It isn't about not having fun. Having a laugh is important for de-stressing but it shouldn't come at someone else's expense.

"We've made other kinds of banter around sexuality and race off limits, but it still seems gender is OK to joke about."

Sue Honeywill, a Devon and Cornwall sergeant, branch vice-chair and member of the national women's group, suggested female officers who opted to work part-time for childcare purposes often faced discrimination.

The mother-of-five said: "When it happened to me, I was still the same person, with the same abilities to offer the Force. The only difference was, I was part-time."

Federation national wellbeing secretary Belinda Goodwin told the session: "You still

get eye rolls when you talk about 'female' issues.

"It's just about creating change and bringing barriers down so we can discuss things properly."

Assistant Chief Constable Mark Travis from South Wales Police delivered a presentation on gender discrimination in the workplace which revealed as many as 90 per cent of female officers in Wales said they had experienced sexual harassment at work.

Mark said: "When we talk to people who experience this harassment, they don't want things to escalate, they don't want a big, formal process, they just want the behaviour to stop.

"They just want respect, a good attitude, and to be treated professionally."

Our reps say...

"The definition of misogyny is 'a hatred of women'. I don't feel the debate was about the 'hatred' of women, more the non-equal treatment. Very good panellists and views though." **Jamie Plant**

"Highlighted the hidden issues disproportionately impacting on part-time officers, the majority of whom are female officers." **Matt Ward**

HAVING A LAUGH IS IMPORTANT FOR DE-STRESSING BUT IT SHOULDN'T COME AT SOMEONE ELSE'S EXPENSE.

Panel praises pandemic recruits

There was no shortage of praise for new recruits during a panel session at this year's annual conference, with those who have been forced to complete virtual training due to the pandemic called 'resilient' and 'nothing short of commendable'.

With an ambitious target of an extra 20,000 officers by 2023, concerns were raised about the impact virtual training has had on new recruits, with Federation roads policing lead and National Board member Gemma Fox recognising that newcomers have been immediately asked to put both themselves and their families at risk.

She said: "What we've asked of them, is to pick up a uniform, to put it on and get on with it. They have done exactly that while putting themselves at risk of coronavirus, as well as risking taking the virus back home with them."

Dave Bamber, national Federation lead for professional development and issues related to the College of Policing, explained:

"What we can't deny is the impact that the last year has had on our officers and members. Young officers have been forced to learn independently, online and virtually. We need to get an understanding of what effect that has had on them.

"What needs to be acknowledged is none of this is at the fault of our officers."

Deputy Chief Constable Janette McCormick QPM, programme director for the Police Uplift Programme, said that the pandemic has brought with it personal and professional challenges for both current and new members of staff across the force.

"We've all had to adapt, which means



Dave Bamber, national Federation lead for professional development.

we've started recruiting virtually and investing in training online," she added, "What has been fantastic is to have been so supported by the Federation."

Jo Noakes, director of workforce development at the College of Policing supported Janette's comments, stating that she was 'confident' forces would see a set of great quality new recruits.

As well as recruitment, emphasis was also on retention and the significance of finding out why people are leaving the service early.

Our rep says...

"The new approach which is heavily biased towards academia exposed the need for trained, experienced tutor constables to be able to transfer the knowledge to practical based policing." **Matt Ward**

‘Be braver with BWV’

Police forces need to be braver in releasing body-worn video in response to officers being tried on social media, the Police Federation’s annual conference has heard.

John Apter, chair of the Federation, said that where it was appropriate and legally sound to do so, body-worn video (BWV) should be made public to counterbalance unfair, edited and out of context social media clips.

John said: “Forces need to be braver in putting body-worn video out to redress the balance. It’s incumbent on us as Federations to liaise with our chief officer team and, where we’re legally able to do this, we need to push out that body-worn video because what it does show, invariably, is certainly not what is being portrayed in that 20-second clip.

“If you look at the context, it shows that police officers are doing incredibly well in the most difficult and challenging of circumstances.”

John was speaking during a session on Day 2 of the conference titled Trial By Media alongside criminal barrister and TV broadcaster Robert Rinder and former BBC home affairs correspondent Danny Shaw.

In a vote of delegates, 93 per cent said they wanted forces to share BWV to set the record straight when footage of incidents were posted on social media.

The session began with an anonymous officer sharing their harrowing experience of being vilified on social media.

“What myself and my family has gone through is crushing and still haunts us today,” they said, “I don’t want anyone to go through what I have when I was simply doing my job.”

Robert Rinder called for a transformation of the way policing responds when officers are vilified in the media.

He said: “There needs to be better training for young officers, for everybody out



Criminal barrister and TV broadcaster Robert Rinder.

there, especially if you’re doing on the beat policing. It’s about understanding not just the law, but it’s understanding you are in the presence of people filming you and that radically changes the complexion of how you police and communicate, and that needs training and thinking.

“Policing in 2021 needs a meaningful, creative, national strategy about how our community police communicate on social media and use those channels for themselves.”

Robert added: “We have a 1990s – at best – media response to a 2021 media landscape.”

Danny Shaw, head of strategy and insight at criminal justice and communications consultancy Crest Advisory, said there was a distinction between mainstream and social media, and how they treat the types of clips being discussed.

“Public confidence in policing is strong,” Mr Shaw said, “What really impacts public confidence in policing is not necessarily a clip on social media but the interactions

people have with the police.

“I’m not diminishing the experience officers have when they’re vilified on social media but we shouldn’t get things out of perspective in terms of the public confidence in policing.”

He added: “When it comes to the mainstream media, I wouldn’t get so caught up on the headlines. What’s more important is the article, the context it’s written in, whether there’s balance, whether it’s accurate.

“ WHAT REALLY IMPACTS PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN POLICING IS NOT NECESSARILY A CLIP ON SOCIAL MEDIA BUT THE INTERACTIONS PEOPLE HAVE WITH THE POLICE. ”

“In my experience a lot of trouble goes into making sure pieces that are written are balanced and are accurate.

“There’s a difference between mainstream media and social media. It’s a bit like walking into a private members’ club on a quiet Saturday afternoon and going into a pub at closing time. People are shouting at each other on social media, mainstream media has a filter.”

He concluded policing needed a ‘twin-track approach’ to the media.

“Police forces need to step up on social media and start to put out some of these good news videos and put things in context,” he said, “At the same time, I’d really start to speak to the editors in the mainstream media and get your points across. It needs a longer term conversation with some examples to really get that understanding there.”

Our rep says...

“Excellent points put across by the media.” **Jamie Plant**

“ IT’S ABOUT UNDERSTANDING NOT JUST THE LAW, BUT IT’S UNDERSTANDING YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF PEOPLE FILMING YOU AND THAT RADICALLY CHANGES THE COMPLEXION OF HOW YOU POLICE AND COMMUNICATE, AND THAT NEEDS TRAINING AND THINKING. ”

Prioritise officers' safety



Metropolitan Police Sergeant Nikki O'Malley spoke about her experiences of working on the frontline at protests.

"My view will always fall on the side of officer safety," national chair John Apter told delegates during a conference session on policing protests.

The segment focussed on the protests that have taken place over the past year and whether more needs to be done on educating the public on the role of the police during these sometimes violent demonstrations.

“ POLICING REACTS TO CRISIS. THE PRESSURE COOKER OF FRUSTRATION HAS BUILT UP AND WE HAD A TASTE OF IT LAST SUMMER. ”

John warned against taking advantage of the goodwill shown by officers, who continue to want to protect the public, despite the situation.

He said: "We have the best police force in the world. We don't have to do a lot to make people feel valued and wanted."

Speaking about the fact that frontline officers are not always required to wear protective kit when working at protests, he

argued that there were more concerns about how they will look in the protective gear rather than prioritising staff safety.

Looking to the summer ahead, John said forces are committed to protecting the public.

"Policing reacts to crisis," he explained, "The pressure cooker of frustration has built up and we had a taste of it last summer."

He continued to admit that forces needed to look at the way they respond to protests and ask themselves if it is right.

Metropolitan Police Sergeant Nikki O'Malley spoke about her experiences of working on the frontline at protests, including one in which she was not wearing a protective kit, resulting in her getting injured.

Avon and Somerset Chief Constable Andy Marsh and Inspector Kim Brown of Cumbria Constabulary were also part of the conversation.

CC Marsh defended his Force's actions during the toppling of the Edward Colston statue in Bristol. He insisted that if officers

had intervened to prevent the statue from being rolled into the river they may have been seriously injured.

The group discussed whether the public and media should be better educated on the role of the police, especially at protests.

John said: "I've been relentless in my messaging to the media, not only in support of officers but also educating the public too on why we do something in a certain way."

He recognised that some chief officers worked closely with the media, locally, he also said that there is so much more that could be done nationally.

"The Police Federation has got a part to play, and we will continue to do our best to provide that education," he added.

Our rep says...

"Good speakers highlighting the issues with public order protests." **Jamie Plant**

“ I'VE BEEN RELENTLESS IN MY MESSAGING TO THE MEDIA, NOT ONLY IN SUPPORT OF OFFICERS BUT ALSO EDUCATING THE PUBLIC TOO ON WHY WE DO SOMETHING IN A CERTAIN WAY. ”

New culture on conduct?



Clockwise from top left: the session featured Phill Matthews, Chief Constable Craig Guildford, Ian Collins, Michael Lockwood and Ian Balbi, head of police discipline policy at the Home Office.

It is not the end of the journey, and adjustments still need to be made but it is absolutely clear that we are moving in the right direction in terms of embedding a culture of learning and development rather than sanction and punishment with police conduct proceedings.

That was the message given to delegates at a conference session called New Regs – New Culture?

Phill Matthews, conduct and performance lead for the national Federation, said that relations between the Federation and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) had improved and he thanked the police watchdog's director general Michael Lockwood for his efforts to overhaul the system.

As a sign of the progress made, Phill will soon be giving the Federation's first input into IOPC investigators' training.

But he said there were some issues with forces adjusting to the new raised bar for conduct proceedings, and the performance requiring improvement and reflective practice procedures introduced with the new conduct regulations in February last year.

Much of the session focussed on the timeliness of conduct inquiries which all agreed was essential for police officers, complainants and the reputation of the complaints system as a whole.

Phill explained: "I listened intently to both

the policing minister and the Home Secretary yesterday when they were asked about it (a time limit) and they just didn't get the issue, which is a real shame.

"We want them to meet with us because so far we've been asking to meet with them to explain our viewpoint and they haven't wanted to meet with us. We're not asking for a finite cut off where it goes over this

“WE'RE NOT ASKING FOR A FINITE CUT OFF WHERE IT GOES OVER THIS TIME AND YOU LOSE IT. WHAT WE WANT IS SOMETHING THAT'S FAIR BOTH TO OUR MEMBERS AND TO THE COMPLAINANTS.”

time and you lose it. What we want is something that's fair both to our members and to the complainants".

Mr Lockwood said there would be times, where a case was complex or there were vulnerable victims, where cases might go

over the 12-month limit the Federation would like to see on investigations. The IOPC was setting targets for nine and six months next year.

He stressed that there should be a real emphasis on learning not just for individual officers but also for forces themselves.

Phill agreed and said the IOPC had now issued more than 400 learning reports, rather than those involved being sanctioned.

"That's key for us because those 400 reports help to change the underlying policies and procedures of forces which will prevent our members falling foul of the misconduct system in future," he explained, "We need forces to adopt that learning and rewrite their policies and procedures, so our members don't find themselves on the wrong end of the misconduct arena."

Craig Guildford, Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police and NPCC lead for complaints and misconduct, welcomed progress that had been made but also urged Federation reps to raise with their chief officers any concerns that reflective practice was not being used in the way it was intended.

Our rep says...

"Cambridgeshire appear to have embraced this concept." **Matt Ward**

Wellbeing: 'It's the simple things that need to change'

National wellbeing lead Hayley Aley says that 'even the smallest changes made across the force will have a huge impact' on the welfare of officers, as she joined a conference session called **Wellbeing – Whose Responsibility Is It?**

Hayley's comments were part of a discussion that focused on the wellbeing of officers, which highlighted the demands of the job, pressures felt by staff and solutions that could help combat wellbeing issues.

Looking ahead, Hayley said she hoped to not be sitting here next year, 'saying the same thing over and over'.

"We've only just opened the box, looking at what pressures are affecting officers," she said, adding: "We need to look at the things that need to change to prevent mental health and the physical issues people are feeling. We need to prevent people from walking away from the workplace because they can't cope."

"It's the simple things that need to change, the day-to-day jobs. Those quick changes will have a long-term impact on the organisation."

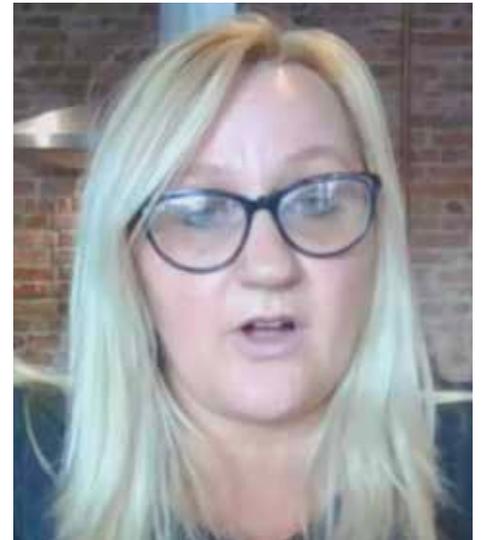
Hayley was joined by National Board member and wellbeing secretary Belinda Goodwin, who said that wellbeing can be broken down into four parts, including mental health, physical wellbeing, financial wellbeing and general wellbeing.

"We have to stop just talking about it," she said, "We need to make fundamental changes to impact the wellbeing across forces."

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes of the National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS), known as Oscar Kilo, explained: "We've given officers the confidence to talk. The data tells us that people are becoming more confident in sticking their hand up and saying they're struggling with mental health. We need to be able to support them."

Several members of West Mercia Police Federation spoke up about the wellbeing issues felt across the Force.

Steve Butler, West Mercia branch secretary, ended by saying: "Let's not lose sight of why we need to get this right. If these officers break, the significance of these breaks is huge."



National wellbeing lead Hayley Aley.

Our rep says...

"A well-presented subject, a good debate and speakers." **Jamie Plant**

Clarity needed on use of force

Frontline police must be given greater clarity on the use of force with officers at risk of falling foul of the law under existing guidelines, the 2021 Police Federation of England and Wales conference has heard.



Scott Ingram.

The Federation is campaigning for better standards and education for officers who are forced to make split-second decisions to use force or authorise other officers to do so.

Scott Ingram, lead lawyer on criminal police misconduct at law firm Slater and Gordon, said: "An officer's decision to use force will be justified based on their honestly held belief so if it is their honest belief about the need to use force they are not going to be found guilty of any

criminal offence.

"That's a subjective test - the honest belief of the officer based on their understanding or their perception of the facts.

"But in misconduct proceedings, because of a Court of Appeal decision, even if an officer has an honestly held belief, they can still be dismissed if a view is taken on an objective level that the belief was unreasonable.

"Most police officer decisions to use force are in quick time, they are in a difficult situation, a stressful scenario, so quite how an officer is expected to be able to weigh up the criminal law test and the misconduct test before they decide to use force is really what identifies the problem here.

"It is far from ideal and needs to be resolved by a decision in the Supreme Court."

Federation firearms and less lethal lead Steve Hartshorn said: "My concern is this decision, which is authoritative at the moment, affects every strand of policing, it

affects the frontline officers who are responding to 999 calls, it affects decision-makers at a senior police leadership level, it might affect a chief constable who wants to effect a policing plan.

"So it is only right that everybody involved - at the front end, in the middle and at the very top - knows exactly what standard they are being assessed and held to account by because at some point they will have to justify their decisions either in a criminal court, at a gross misconduct hearing or at an inquest."

Our reps say...

"Good to see the Federation is raising the issues around use of force, too many different standards from PSDs." **Jamie Plant**

"There is more that the organisation needs to do in terms of training in light of the W80 outcome." **Matt Ward**

New wellbeing toolkit is aimed at detectives



Glyn Pattinson, chair of the Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum.

A unique wellbeing toolkit aimed specifically at detectives and investigators has been previewed at the annual national Police Federation conference.

Details of the specially-commissioned Oscar Kilo Toolkit were unveiled during a discussion which covered issues such as recruitment, retention and growing fears of officer burn-out.

Detective Chief Superintendent Martin Brunning of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit said the package could be transformative in terms of improving the emotional wellbeing of detectives and stop them leaving the CID.

“ THIS IS NOT A ONE SIZE FITS ALL OR A TOKEN GESTURE. IT'S GOT REAL SUBSTANCE AS IT COMES FROM A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE PAIN OF HAVING COLLEAGUES CRASHING AND BURNING. ”

He told the session: "This is not a one size fits all or a token gesture. It's got real substance as it comes from a group of people who have been through the pain of having colleagues crashing and burning."

The Investing in the Investigators discussion was led by Glyn Pattinson, chair of the Police Federation's National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF) which has long campaigned for leaders to provide better support for investigators in relation to the unique pressures they face.

He said: "I know that the toolkit is going to get a big launch on 21 June and I am conscious that as senior officers you understand what it's like to be a detective - been there, seen that, done it. But that's not

always the case with some of our senior command team and executive officers across the country.

"So when the emails and correspondence lands with those officers back in their own forces, what can we as Federation reps do to help you help our members?"

Det Ch Supt Brunning said: "I would plead with everybody to get behind this because it is the product of a lot of people with a lot of experience in investigations who also get what it's like to be a young in service new detective or police staff investigator.

The discussion heard how high workloads, the increasing complexity of investigations and the enormous impact on work life balance had led to once-coveted roles in CID losing their appeal.

Thames Valley's Deputy Chief Constable Jason Hogg, who is also detectives' lead on the National Police Chiefs' Council, said a survey by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found 22 per cent of detective posts were vacant and had described it as a 'national crisis'.

His force enjoyed a recruitment boost after highlighting the detective role, introducing flexi-time working arrangements, covering the costs of books for officers studying, giving time off and offering a bonus payment.

Our rep says...

"The wellbeing for detectives bit from Martin Brunning was very emotive. It was really positive to hear that there is a package of information that all forces can utilise to support officers and staff. There was also very interesting input about investigation issues across the country and the areas that chief officers can look at.

"DCC Hogg as national lead has shown how chief officers can make things better for victims of crime and investigators. It was nice to see an input that has solutions and sharing best practice." **Tudor Treharne**

Privilege comes under scrutiny

Fairness and equality came under the spotlight with a powerful session examining race, policing and privilege and the impact they have on public confidence and trust.

The session was led by scholar, activist and broadcaster Robert Beckford, a professor of black theology, who said British society remained one of the most unequal in the western world with unchecked privilege leading to financial and socio-economic consequences across the country.

He told the conference: "We have got to address the subject of privilege because we have got the persistence of structural inequality."

Session host Zac Mader, secretary of the Federation's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and BAME Belief Self-Organised Group, asked how the understanding of privilege could be improved within policing.

Prof Beckford said: "It is about talking about it. Part of the problem is it is not talked about. We need to talk and reflect upon it, to see how we can help in certain circumstances."

"Radical honesty is necessary to address these problems in institutions and organisations. In society we find a way to



Session host Zac Mader, secretary of the Federation's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and BAME Belief Self-Organised Group.



Professor Robert Beckford.

deny things exist, but we need to be completely honest so we can move forward."

He also said officers should try to educate themselves about the issues around privilege and suggested better training and honest answers to difficult questions were needed to tackle bias and inclusion across policing.

He said: "Think about how you can be an

ally and support under-represented groups to ensure there is a real fairness. The fairness we want to see in public institutions and public life."

The professor called for 'really clear and powerful pathways' for career progression among under-represented groups to help improve an imbalance so the police can better reflect the communities they serve.

'We need diverse experiences'

A leading equality expert has identified three key barriers blocking the recruitment of new police officers from black and Asian communities.

Professor Robert Beckford, an academic, activist and broadcaster, pulled no punches when the issue was raised during a diversity session called The Challenge of Difference at the Police Federation annual conference.

Prof Beckford said the first stumbling block was a perceived lack of integrity within the police service.

He told the conference: "There is a lack of recognition of the negative history of policing black and brown communities, particularly black deaths in custody, particularly around miscarriages of justice."

"If I was running the force the first thing I would say is sorry. It doesn't take much to appease people in this context and sorry goes

a long way. So firstly there needs to be that kind of acknowledgement."

Prof Beckford said the second key factor in the recruitment of black and brown officers was the idea that the issue could be addressed by simply having more black and brown people in positions of power.

He said: "It's more about having different types of people, having a diverse representation. The problem is that if you are playing with the norm - the white male norm - it tends to be people who fit the white male norm from black and brown communities at the top of the pile."

"So you end up with a situation where there is less diversity and that is part of the problem - difference isn't the issue, the issue is the norm."

"We need the diverse experiences of black and brown people, women's experiences,

LGBTQ+ experiences - that really does matter."

The award-winning academic said the third stumbling block was over-reliance on long-term recruitment targets.

He said: "I think targets help but we have got to understand the targets are a short-term fix because of a long-term problem - I don't think the targets can be there forever."

"I think the targets can be really productive if they are used in the correct way as a short-term fix to build up the numbers, to produce the right kind of diversity, to deal with the skill-sets that need to be there."

Prof Beckford said the challenge now faced by the police service was to simultaneously recruit diverse people while changing the culture of the institution.

“ IF I WAS RUNNING THE FORCE THE FIRST THING I WOULD SAY IS SORRY. IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TO APPEASE PEOPLE IN THIS CONTEXT AND SORRY GOES A LONG WAY. SO FIRSTLY THERE NEEDS TO BE THAT KIND OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. ”

Our rep says...

"Identified the need to value what individual officers can offer and do as opposed to what their limitations are."
Matt Ward

Fears over changes to driving laws

Federation representatives are being urged to implore their chief officers to ensure that changes to driving legislation aimed at better protecting police drivers make the law truly fit for purpose.

Tim Rogers, Federation national pursuits and driver training lead, gave an update on the provisions of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill during a roads policing session at the conference.

The bill, which is due to become law later this year, sets out changes that will mean officers will no longer be judged by the standards of the careful and competent driver, allowing their professional training and expertise to be taken into account.

But Tim fears the wording of the proposed legislation could lead to officers being further criminalised.

"We are very grateful for the support so far from the Government, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the Independent Office for Police Conduct," he said, but adding that an amendment to the bill is now required.



Tim Rogers, national pursuits and driver training lead.

A new legal test will currently be applied so officers' driving will be measured against that of a 'careful and competent police driver', however, this could still leave them exposed.

"An officer will be licensed to drive in

accordance with what they have been trained to do but nothing more. Performing a manoeuvre which is not trained or in policy is likely to fall into the new definition of dangerous and careless driving under a new test against the careful and competent police driver," Tim explained.

"Going beyond the terms of that licence could give rise to criminal liability. I have grave concerns around the practicality of this approach.

"What's a police officer to do if they encounter something which falls outside of this policy? The bill in its current format won't permit a police officer to respond legally when confronted by the many and varied situations officers are likely to encounter while driving police vehicles."

The Federation has raised its concerns with the National Police Chiefs' Council and is pressing the Government to consider adding a reasonableness defence clause to the bill to give officers flexibility to respond legally to the matters they encounter on duty.

This would take into account what they reasonably believe they are responding to, the threat that is posed and any departure from the relevant standard should be reasonable and proportionate.

During the Home Secretary's Q And A session, Tim asked the Home Secretary to support the Federation's amendment to the bill.

Priti Patel said there was no intention to criminalise officers and that as the bill made its way through Parliament the Home Office would work through how it could make it work in the right way.

“ AN OFFICER WILL BE LICENSED TO DRIVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TRAINED TO DO BUT NOTHING MORE. PERFORMING A MANOEUVRE WHICH IS NOT TRAINED OR IN POLICY IS LIKELY TO FALL INTO THE NEW DEFINITION OF DANGEROUS AND CARELESS DRIVING UNDER A NEW TEST AGAINST THE CAREFUL AND COMPETENT POLICE DRIVER. ”

Federation elections coming soon

Members are being encouraged to stand in the upcoming Federation elections, with national vice-chair Ché Donald calling his appointment 'life-changing'.

Ché was joined by John Partington, deputy national secretary, at this year's annual conference, ahead of the election process which will be kicking off on 1 July.

The pair called on members to stand in the elections, with Ché referring to workplace reps as the 'lifeblood' of the

Federation.

He added: "There are many officers out there who would struggle without them. I really want people to consider it. I found it life-changing.

"As officers, we care for people, that's why we join the police but who looks after us? That's why the Federation exists.

"We're a big family".

Ché said that becoming a rep made him a better supervisor and manager, adding that there are 'more highs than lows' to the role.

He advised anyone who was considering standing to speak to other reps and ask them how they find it, adding: "The best way to sell the job is to hear from the reps themselves."

If you are interested being a Fed rep, please contact your local rep or the office team.



'We made it the best it could be'



John Apter sums up conference 2021.

The national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales closed this year's conference by saying the decision to make it a virtual event was the right one.

John Apter told facilitator Ian Collins: "This was our first virtual conference so it has been strange. We would rather not have had to do it this way but I think we made it the best it could be.

"We have had over 1,200 registered delegates, some from Canada, America, all

over, so it has been a great opportunity to reach out to more people.

"People asked me why we didn't wait until after lockdown was lifted but we had to make a decision and we didn't know what was going to happen – we still don't - so it was the right decision in the circumstances and the feedback has been really positive."

John read out the names of those workplace representatives retiring, adding: "There would normally be applause but we

can imagine it."

Ian Collins said the theme of conference 2021 had been Policing Under Pressure and at times it had also been 'conference under pressure'.

John added: "We had a couple of glitches and some things going on behind the scenes which caused some hairy moments!"

He then thanked Ian for all his 'friendship and hard work' and said he was looking forward to conference 2022.

Lee lucky to survive assault that caused bleed on the brain

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom says she was 'saddened and stunned' that a man who nearly killed one of her colleagues was jailed for just 20 months.

Liz spoke out on behalf of PC Leo Clarke, who was punched by Joshua Gull (27) in Peterborough on 8 February and later suffered a bleed on his brain.

It would almost certainly have proved fatal if not for the quick thinking of Leo's sergeant and colleagues who noticed he was disorientated afterwards and had him taken to hospital.

Liz explained: "Leo was on his way to another incident when he was diverted to attend a report of a male being threatening and violent at his grandmother's house. On body-worn video you can see the defendant swearing and shouting and Leo calmly trying to talk to him."

A witness saw several punches be thrown, with one connecting with Leo's head. The situation was finally resolved when back-up arrived but back at the station Leo complained of a headache and started not making sense. Two hours later he was having emergency surgery to remove a bleed.

“ HE'S THE MOST UNSELFISH OFFICER I'VE EVER COME ACROSS AND VERY HUMBLE. ”

Thankfully the surgery was successful, but Leo is faced with a significant time away from work to recover and has had his driving licence removed for six months because of double vision.

"He's desperate to get back to work," said Liz. "But we've said to Leo that he must rest and take the time he needs – he's 24 and young in service, hopefully he has 30 years to do everything he wants to do, but it's frustrating for him to have to rely on his family for assistance. He's the most unselfish officer I've ever come across and very humble."

His attacker pleaded guilty to causing grievous bodily harm but, despite his 20-month prison sentence, he could be out in eight to nine months due to time spent on remand, Liz said.

She added: "The sentence was a surprise. When you think people get longer for a



Leo Clarke's injuries.



Leo at his passing out ceremony with Tim Stonebridge.

cannabis factory, for growing some plants, and here we had an officer in hospital with potentially fatal or career ending injuries. Had officers not picked up on Leo's change in behaviour and had his sergeant sent him home, he would have died.

"Leo is disappointed because he doesn't want this to happen to anybody else and he feels that the sentence sends the wrong message. I agree – if you don't give the appropriate sentence there will be no deterrent for assaulting officers, people will just think it is acceptable. Leo was pleased to see the public comments – we had members of the public saying it was appalling and we should appeal it. I have asked the Chief and he is looking into that."

The Federation is continuing to provide practical and welfare support for Leo and his loved ones.

Liz said: "I don't think there can be anything worse for the family than having that knock on the door. Leo's girlfriend said that she saw the shape of the uniform outside and her heart sank. It was difficult for Leo's mum and dad who couldn't sit with him in hospital because of Covid."

"It has been really hard on the family but they are incredibly proud of Leo and what he does. You can go 30 years without this kind of assault and hopefully this is the last time."

Leo will be Cambridgeshire branch's nominee for this year's Police Federation Bravery Awards.

ASSAULTS INCREASE

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom is reiterating calls for the courts to use their full sentencing powers in cases involving assaults on police and other emergency service workers.

Liz was commenting after new crime figures released by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) showed a 26 per rise in assaults against emergency workers. The increase is thought to be driven by an upturn in common assaults on the police, including suspects spitting on officers while claiming to be infected with Covid-19.

"It is shocking to think that these attacks on officers and other emergency service workers have increased at a time when they are on the frontline of the nation's response to the pandemic," Liz says.

"It is unacceptable at any time but somehow it seems even worse that people are prepared to attack the very workers who are trying to help their communities by maintaining essential services despite the risks they face in terms of contracting the virus while doing their jobs.

"The courts now have tougher sentences available to them when dealing with those responsible for these assaults and they must use their full sentencing powers. These assaults have to stop."

National Police Federation chair John Apter has also responded to the release of the figures.

He explained: "This increased level of violence is not just a one-off. It is becoming the new norm which is completely unacceptable. Violence in our society is not just a policing issue, all parts of Government and society itself must work together to combat this alarming increase.

"Part of this is ensuring those responsible for attacking police officers face a suitable deterrent in court. The sentencing guidelines have been changed, so we need judges and magistrates to use these powers to set an example to those who are assaulting our colleagues, those responsible must spend time in prison. This unjustified violence is a stain on society and needs to be dealt with robustly."

The latest crime figures cover the four-week period ending 11 April 2021 and are compared with the equivalent period in 2019, rather than 2020. This is to allow comparisons with a more normal time-period, since the national lockdown in place at the same time last year (2020) was associated with notable reductions in demands on the police.

Wellbeing dogs supporting officers



The project lead of a brand-new wellbeing and trauma support dogs initiative says it is vital that everything is done to better support officers with their mental health.

The project which is being launched by Oscar Kilo (OK), the national police wellbeing service, tied in with this year's Mental Health Awareness Week in May.

Project lead Garry Botterill has explained how the project will help build on the newly established wellbeing dog network, which has so far been supported by 35 forces nationwide.

"Supporting officers' mental health can take many forms and using dogs is just one technique," said Garry, "We researched the work that was already being done and started to form a network of enthusiastic people who were passionate about using dogs to support wellbeing.

"Being under one umbrella means that there are now uniform standards, policies and assessments, which means there's also a lower risk of things going wrong."

The wellbeing support dogs will be given OK9 jackets, certificates and badges and their handlers across the forces will be given OK9 pin badges, to make their positions official and known to their colleagues.

"Being in the company of dogs is a great way to reduce anxiety and stress," added Garry, "They trigger similar emotions to the new parent-baby bond.

"We, as police, often find it difficult to talk about experiences that might have had an impact on us. Being able to talk about these events helps file the memories away and allows us to deal with what has happened.

"We find that the wellbeing dogs offer either non-judgemental listening, or that prompt to get people talking. I've seen grown men and women on their hands and knees petting a dog and all of a sudden, they

feel it's acceptable for them to show emotion.

"Sometimes we think of the dogs acting as a 'furry bridge' to help people communicate with their friends and colleagues. We often find that being around the dog encourages people to speak out and share their worries."

The project allows retired or injured police dogs, who are unable to continue working as police dogs the opportunity to support officers and staff. Other dogs are specially sourced for the role or are selected because they have the necessary attributes to excel at helping people.

"All of the dogs must be suitable for this kind of project. The key is they've got to love interacting with people," Garry said, "And while the dogs are great, they are only ever as good as their handler. It's essential that these handlers are trained as Mental Health First Aiders or Peer Supporters so they can support officers who need it, when necessary.

Garry, a former wellbeing consultant at Sussex Police and Surrey Police, says his passion for supporting officers with their wellbeing, stems from seeing colleagues face challenges with their mental health.

His commitment to the cause saw him launch a phone app called 'Back Up Buddy' three years ago, which provided extra mental health support for officers.

"I've had friends and colleagues who have suffered with their mental health, some have taken their own lives, or have had PTSD," explained Garry.

"And at my worst time ever, I've found that being around dogs helped me. I've seen and felt what an impact they can have."

For more information on the wellbeing and trauma support project or if you would like to hear more about how you can introduce a wellbeing dog into your work, email Garry at Garry.Botterill@college.pnn.police.uk

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