

FEDLINE

The magazine of Cambridgeshire Police Federation

SUMMER 2023

Brave officers in line for national award

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VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

'WITH RECRUITMENT TARGETS MET, IT'S TIME FOR A PAY UPLIFT'

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

Earlier this year Cambridgeshire Constabulary became one of the first forces in the country to meet its target under the national police officer uplift.

We hit the lofty heights of 1,732 officers (+206 recruits) in March - and went beyond. At present we have the most officers in the Force's history, which is great for the public - but also a relief for serving officers who have been struggling with workloads.

The fact that 35 per cent of the Force are now women (including 43 per cent of new recruits) is a bonus. But as welcome as the uplift is, members will be unlikely to pop open the champagne yet. The recruitment drive is only putting a sticking plaster on the damage done during the austerity years, and those scars will take time to heal.

Until police officers' very real concerns over pay are properly addressed by the Government, there is a real concern we could go backwards.

Let's be honest, none of us joined policing to get rich, but at a bare minimum police officers expect to be able to cover the household bills and to put food on the table. Yet police pay has declined by 17 per cent from 2000-2022 according to the Social Market Foundation (SMF) think tank. Incidentally, MPs' salaries rose by four per cent in the same period, where is the fairness in that?

The SMF argues that pay should include a 'P-factor' element which reflects the unique responsibilities police officers. This includes the risk of exposure to physical and psychological harm, alongside the

restrictions placed on police officers' private lives. The Federation will continue to demand fairness and make the point to the government that pay erosion harms all of us. Pay is the next uplift we need to see.

One officer the Force will be retaining is our Chief Constable Nick Dean. He may have announced only recently that he would be stepping down in September, at his five years in post, but he has since had a change of heart. This is good news for the Force, Cambridgeshire Police Federation and me personally as we value the strong working relationship we have built. Mr Dean has always been fair and honest and treats colleagues with respect.

His about-turn did present a dilemma for us though: whether to run Fedline's 'retirement interview' with him. In the end we decided to go ahead so you can read about Mr Dean's career and his thoughts on the Force. You'll find this on pages 6-8.

You will also want to read about Cambridgeshire nominations for this year's Police Bravery Awards in July. DCs Lily Deacon and Craig Trevor showed remarkable courage by pulling a motorist to safety from the wreck of her car, moments before it was engulfed in flames. See the opposite page for the story.

Finally, a shout out on the Oscar Kilo survey which still has a couple more weeks to run. Please take a moment to contribute your experiences on the current wellbeing provision offered by the Force. Your views on what works, and what doesn't, will give us a better picture of where support is needed.

I hope you enjoy this month's edition of Fedline and as always we welcome your views on any of the topics covered.

PENSIONS RULING

This is a brief update to say that we have received the Employment Tribunal's judgement of the police pension discrimination claim brought against the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and led by Leigh Day Solicitors.

The tribunal found in favour of PFEW in relation to indirect age discrimination, and ruled in favour of the claimants on a number of claims of direct age discrimination and victimisation.

The judgement makes for very difficult reading for the organisation. However,

we would like to assure the membership that PFEW's National Board and National Council take the Employment Tribunal's comments and judgement very seriously. We will reflect on it, affording it the necessary and thorough review that it deserves. Earlier today, the National Board and National Council met to begin that process.

We will comment on, and respond to, the judgement fully in due course.

Steve Hartshorn, national chair
Calum Macleod, national secretary

POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS: DARING DUO UP FOR NATIONAL AWARD

A pair of courageous Cambridgeshire cops who risked their lives as they saved a woman from a burning car have been nominated for a national Police Bravery Award.

Detective Constables Lily Deacon and Craig Trevor have been recognised for their actions, after they dragged a woman from her car and to safety, just seconds before the vehicle 'went up in flames'.

Speaking about the incident, Craig has told how, after realising the woman was trapped in her vehicle, the quick-thinking duo forced the car's door frame open, with just moments to spare.

"Myself and Lily were driving an unmarked car, when all of a sudden, we saw a vehicle heading toward us, head on, at what must've been around 80mph," said 41-year-old Craig, who's been in the Force

for 15 years.

"We both thought we were going to die, because this car was moving in our lane, so fast towards us. But then, at the last minute, it quickly swerved, missing us by a few feet."

Craig recalls how the vehicle flipped, before 'heading into a ditch'.

"We stopped our car as fast as they could, before beginning our search to locate the vehicle," he continued.

"Lily was on the main road, and I took to the field. Lily soon called me, she said that she could see the flipped car, it was on its side and there was smoke coming out of the vehicle."

As the pair raced towards the vehicle, Craig simultaneously called the fire service, and for back-up.

"When we got to the car, we realised there was a female trapped inside and there was black smoke coming out of the bonnet," Craig explained.

"The car was locked, so I got my baton out to smash the window screen. However, the woman inside managed to unlock her door, but was still trapped inside, as a result of how the metal frame had bent."

In a race against time, Craig and Lily managed to bend the metal frame of the car and help the woman out.

"I think at that moment, the sheer adrenaline gave us the strength we needed to bend the car frame," said Craig, who revealed how just moments after rescuing the woman, 'the whole car went up in flames'.

The pair of officers managed to pull the woman to safety, before blocking the road off, so no other vehicles could pass. The fire service and ambulance arrived shortly after.

The driver provided a positive breath test in the ambulance. She was sentenced to a 16-month driving ban, which was reduced to 16 weeks, and fined £120, with £105 court costs.

"Both Lily and I were very surprised to have been nominated," Craig said, "To be honest, it was just another day at work. We just happened to be in the right place, at the right time.

"Of course, it's always nice to be recognised in a positive way and I'm really looking forward to the awards ceremony."



DC Craig Trevor has been nominated for the Police Bravery Awards with DC Lily Deacon.

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CHAIR PRAISES ONGOING IMPACT OF OPERATION HAMPSHIRE

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom says attacks on police officers must never be accepted as part of the job.

Liz praised the impact of Operation Hampshire and said there was still work to do to stop violence and abuse towards members.

She said: "Our Pay and Morale Survey showed that attacks on police officers is a big issue for our members.

"It shows that 11 per cent had been physically attacked at least once a week in the previous 12 months, 22 per cent had been verbally threatened and two per cent had been spat on. It's absolutely unacceptable.

“ OPERATION HAMPSHIRE IS MAKING STRIDES IN CHANGING THE CULTURE AROUND ASSAULTS ON POLICE OFFICERS AND STAFF AND WE’LL CONTINUE TO DRIVE THAT ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERS. ”

"All assaults have an impact on individuals and, it's something as a Federation, we're determined to tackle.

"Through Operation Hampshire, we're committed to supporting our members. They need to know that when they are the victim of violence or abusive behaviour, the support, help, and advice is there, and that those who carry out such attacks will be brought to justice.

"Operation Hampshire is making strides in changing the culture around assaults on police officers and staff and we'll continue to drive that on behalf of our members."

It's a message echoed by Steve Hartshorn, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, who described Operation Hampshire as a "legacy project in policing".

Op Hampshire aims to provide a consistent approach to wellbeing support and victim care following an assault,



Dave Brewster, national Op Hampshire coordinator.

consider the potential impact of every attack, increase criminal justice outcomes and improve overall understanding of assaults on officers.

Nearly three years after its launch, Op Hampshire has a network of project leads across each force. It's now a priority workstream for the National Police Wellbeing Service, Oscar Kilo, and the Police Covenant while it has also been adopted by UNISON. The strategy been backed by Chris Philp, the Crime and Policing Minister.

Steve said: "I'm immensely proud of how far Op Hampshire has come. Its success speaks for itself.

"I genuinely believe we can get the public's confidence in the police back and it will be through projects like Op Hampshire," he added.

Dave Brewster, the national Op Hampshire coordinator, has built a network of leads to represent every force and share knowledge and experiences.

He said: "My goal is that every assault on a police officer or member of staff is

recorded, investigated and then those involved are given the correct support they need.

"Even if they don't think that they need support, I believe everyone should at least be offered it."

The Federation's national wellbeing lead, Belinda Goodwin, said the progress Op Hampshire has made in such a short time is 'immense'.

Belinda said: "The work that's gone into driving Op Hampshire, and the passion of those involved - it makes me so proud to be part of the Federation.

"But Op Hampshire should be business as usual - across all forces. After all, when an officer heads out on duty, they'll check their tyres and their petrol, but what are they doing for themselves?"

"A huge element of Op Hampshire is prioritising the welfare of our officers. You never get used to being assaulted - it's the traumatic impact that assaults have on our mental health that's unseen, especially with regard to repeat victims."

FED MEMBER THROWS SUPPORT BEHIND NEW BODY ARMOUR DESIGNS

A Cambridgeshire Police Federation member has told how she welcomes newly designed body armour with open arms after the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) confirmed gender-specific and more comfortable protective clothing would now be available to forces.

Police constable April Cooper, who has been in the job for five years, says she is 'so glad something is finally being done' about the body armour, calling the current 'heavy' protective clothing 'very restrictive'.

"The design of the body armour is a major issue. It absolutely destroys our bodies. I've had to see a chiropractor as a result of the damage caused - and I know I'm not the only one. It's causing us serious, long-term health issues," said 30-year-old April.

"It's very restrictive and very front-heavy - so if you're chasing an offender, for example, you'll find the front lifts up, into your face. It's not practical and can actually restrict your breathing - in the summer months especially, it's an absolute nightmare.

"And the weight of it, it's like you're constantly carrying a small child around. Having newly designed body armour will not only improve our physical health but I think it will help our overall wellbeing too."

April's comments come after PFEW wellbeing lead Belinda Goodwin urged forces to invest in new, groundbreaking, gender-specific body armour, designed with increased protection and to enhance comfort.

"The pressure caused by the body armour led to painful rashes and my



PC April Cooper.

breasts becoming numb. I still have scars now. I actually had to use nappy-rash cream to help with the pain, and I'm sure I'm not the only one," says Belinda.

Having spent almost five years campaigning for more comfortable body armour, Belinda has shared her own experiences on the front line, as she celebrates fresh body armour, which has both male and female variations, being made available.

The once heavy and uncomfortable kit now has a lighter and more flexible alternative, with additional layers of extra protection available.

"This is a very exciting time and I'm so proud to have been involved in this process. We've finally bought body armour into the 21st century and, as a female, I am particularly excited about this. I know this newly designed body

armour will make such a difference to so many of our members, both male and female," said Belinda, who joined the Force back in 2008.

"Now, we just need forces to invest. They need to invest for both the mental and physical benefit of their members."

The third-generation body armour moulds to the body shape and is lighter in weight, without compromising on safety.

Belinda has recalled her own experience, which led to her needing an operation on her breast after she developed a fistula - an infected and inflamed lump, that in some cases, requires draining.

"Unfortunately, I had to undergo an operation to remove the fistula. I was then redeployed to a job which didn't require me to wear body armour. During that time, my breasts were fine. Then, when I returned to a role in 2008, which involved me wearing body armour, I required yet another operation," explained Belinda.

"I took my body armour to the doctor and he said that while he couldn't say for sure it had caused the infection, it wouldn't be doing me any good at all.

"He actually said that if I got any more infections and needed any more operations on my breasts, I would have to have had a mastectomy.

"That prompted me to take on roles which didn't require me to wear body armour 24/7 because applying that much pressure to my body was a genuine concern of mine."

Belinda is also wanting to raise awareness of good practices surrounding body armour, including the need for regular breaks throughout the day.

"Because of the ongoing pressures surrounding our officers and this 'need' to be ready to head out on a job immediately, some of them don't take their body armour off," continued Belinda.

"But it doesn't work like that. Our bodies are not designed to wear something that heavy for such long periods of time. Education is key."

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‘I HAVE BEEN VERY LUCKY AND HAVE LOVED EVERY MINUTE’

In April, Chief Constable Nick Dean announced his plans to retire in September this year.

Having agreed to an ‘exit’ interview with Fedline in which says he would like to be remembered as Chief who actually never lost sight of the officers and staff who work tirelessly for the Force and the communities it serves, at the start of June he decided not to retire after all.

Saying he still felt passionate about policing, Mr Dean said he realised now was not the right time to leave.

Nevertheless, we decided to run our ‘retirement’ feature so you can find out more about his views on policing and his career.

What made you join the police service?

I have always wanted to join the police. My uncle was a traffic officer in the West Mids when I was growing up and he encouraged

me to take an interest. The attraction of not being behind a desk day in day out, and the fact that you never know what the day brings, adds to that variety. I was also attracted to the varied career where you can do so many things within one ‘job’. I have always had a strong sense of public service and this was very much an opportunity to make a difference.

Did you get in at the first attempt?

I couldn’t get into my home force which was the West Mids as I was half a centimetre too short, those were the days where all forces had a height requirement, so I applied to West Mercia. I got through to the final interview and they deferred me for a year due to my age. I then spent six years in the RAF and reapplied to join the police and was successful. I always knew I would re-apply and I did this on leaving the services.

What career would you have chosen if you hadn’t joined the police?

I was very science orientated at school and college, doing chemistry, biology and physics at A Level so I guess some sort of science angle would have been where I would have ended up.

What were your early ambitions in policing? Did you always have your sights set on being a Chief Constable?

I never joined to reach the top. My early ambitions were to join firearms but I quickly enjoyed investigations and, in fact, neighbourhood policing. I took my promotion exams early in my career and I was lucky enough to succeed so promotion through to superintendent happened fairly quickly. Even when I reached Chief Supt I still did not think about becoming a chief officer until a temporary opportunity presented itself. After becoming an

“ I SIGNED UP FOR 30 YEARS AND NEVER AT ANY POINT HAVE I CONTEMPLATED LEAVING. WHEN I BECAME CHIEF CONSTABLE I SIGNED A CONTRACT FOR FIVE YEARS AND I KNEW I WOULD DO IT AND NOT LEAVE. THIRTY-ONE YEARS HAVE GONE VERY QUICKLY BUT I HAVE NEVER WANTED TO DO ANYTHING ELSE. ”

Assistant Chief Constable, I was more than happy with that position – I liked the operations side of the business. However, as people moved on or retired I was selected for Deputy Chief Constable and again thought I had reached my limit. Being a Chief Constable was still not on my immediate mind as I believe there is a careful balance between ambition and doing everything possible to reach the top; you miss so many opportunities of what is right under your feet if you are not careful.

What was your first posting?

I was first posted to King’s Lynn in Norfolk. Foot beat for the majority of my first two years with the odd spell on a patrol car. It was a great grounding and something I look back with fond memories. I had a great tutor and first sergeants who really did mould me and set me off in the right direction.

What were your early years as a police officer like?

I have enjoyed every part of my policing career but the first few years are held in my mind. It was of course very different, no computers, no sat navs, basic intelligence systems and you really had to know your stuff. You dealt with things from the start to finish, often ending up presenting your evidence in court. It was a time when you were expected to be pro-active, go out there and make your own luck and that ‘freedom’ was excellent. You knew that if you didn’t put in any traffic process, stop search or arrest someone, your sergeants would be all over you – but in a good way. They expected you to ‘police’ and do your job to the highest standards. However, it was good fun, as a shift in those early days we had a tremendous sense of belonging and pride; you just can’t capture that friendship and loyalty and, if I see anyone from my old shift, we immediately talk about those days.

Do you remember your first arrest?

Yes, it was a domestic assault arrest in South Lynn. We were due to finish a night shift in half an hour and another wise old crew called me up to see if I wanted the arrest. I course I did, so I headed down to the address, they let me make the arrest and then take the person back into custody. It wasn’t until then that I realised I had to do the whole file before I could book off

duty. They well and truly had me over as they headed off on time to a good day’s sleep while I was still writing the file out.

What do you consider the three highlights of your career?

I have so many it’s hard to say. Being appointed a Chief Constable is definitely up there; it’s such a privilege. I have been involved in so many cases, searched venues as a search officer and POLSA that the public would never imagine, had the privilege of being involved in policing Royal residencies, represented the force at so many different occasions. However, the highlight is simply being part of policing and having the ability to make a difference at whatever level or rank or role you are at. The uniqueness of being a police officer cannot be replicated and, as I say to all new recruits, you need to take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself.

And what have been the low points?

I recall one investigation early on as a detective inspector when I dealt with a sudden death of a baby. I attended the post mortem and that had a profound effect on me as my children were young at the time. I still remember walking into my house after the shift and going straight to their bedrooms to check if they were OK. You simply can’t escape the human element of policing and nor should you. It’s how you cope with the unexpected that shapes you. I have to say I haven’t had many low points, in any job you will get moments which test you or your resilience, however, over all I have been every lucky and loved every minute.

At any point during your career, have you considered leaving and doing something else? Please explain.

Never, I signed up for 30 years and never at any point have I contemplated leaving. When I became Chief Constable I signed a contract for five years and I knew I would do it and not leave. Thirty-one years have gone very quickly but I have never wanted to do anything else.

What has changed the most in policing during your career?

There are a whole host of things that have altered, some things for the better. Despite all the technical advances policing is still a people vocation. I have seen huge changes in the way people are treated. I recall moments in my career when I have been supervised or come into contact with managers or peers who simply treated people awfully. I knew that if ever I got into a position of supervisory responsibility I would never treat people like that. Of course, we all make mistakes and, on reflection, we may have done things differently but overall, hopefully those who know me, know that I do care about my staff.

How important do you consider the Federation’s role in policing?

It’s hugely important. To understand the real feelings within the majority of the workforce is vital to shape and influence the future. Officers need a body which can protect and stand up for their welfare, for their pay and conditions and have those honest conversations with chief officers or Government for example. Officers need to know that they have a voice, even if it does not change every issue, the fact that they have been listened to is so important. Especially as things change so fast within policing. And it’s not just about the here and now, it’s about that ‘protection’ for the future. Any force that has lost the confidence of its Federation is in a poorer state.

How have you found working with Cambridgeshire Police Federation?

Really supportive. It stems from trust and openness and a no surprise culture

Feature continued overleaf

“ THE HIGHLIGHT IS SIMPLY BEING PART OF POLICING AND HAVING THE ABILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT WHATEVER LEVEL OR RANK OR ROLE YOU ARE AT. THE UNIQUENESS OF BEING A POLICE OFFICER CANNOT BE REPLICATED AND, AS I SAY TO ALL NEW RECRUITS, YOU NEED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY THAT PRESENTS ITSELF. ”

which I hope I have bought to every staff association.

I believe you are a big supporter of the Police Bravery Awards. How important do you feel the awards ceremony is?

I am a huge supporter of reward and recognition and there is no better event than the national Police Bravery Awards in London. Every officer and staff member puts themselves on the line every single shift and a huge amount of bravery is done every day. It is only right we recognise that and importantly allow an opportunity for the officers' partners or family to be involved in that day.

What are the Force's strengths?

I believe the Force has changed beyond recognition over the past five years and that is not simply down to me. A complete change in chief officer team, a new approach to business planning a re-focus on delivery of what is important, huge investment in uplift of numbers has changed the Force. A strength of the Force is its resilience when you look back through the uncertainty of Covid and how we have changed how we operate. Equally innovation plays a huge part in how we have developed – right through the organisation I see excellent innovation and new ways of delivering policing. Importantly, I think the culture has changed, national events have re-focused our minds on the 'how' rather than simply hitting a target.

What challenges do you think Cambridgeshire Police, and policing generally, will face in the next few years? For example, what do you feel will be the medium/long-term impact of the Police Uplift Programme?

Although very welcome with regards to extra officers, it has left a gap in police staff recruitment and the ability to have the right balance. Investment in police staff will have to be growth which, given the rise in the cost of living which has hit us all, will be very hard to achieve. This is to the detriment of policing and, in my opinion, a detriment to the communities that we are here to service. It will take a long time to see the effects of uplift, it isn't an instant 'hit'. New officers need time to understand the role and get their skills developed. We also need to keep eye on finances; the bubble effect of recruiting such large numbers will have to be factored in as we move forward. My fear will be that if sustained investment is not made, an easy solution will be to cut officer numbers to balance the books; this simply cannot



Cambridgeshire Chief Constable Nick Dean and Cambridgeshire Federation chair Liz Groom.

happen given the huge effort that has been undertaken over the past three years to attract people into policing.

Who do you most admire in policing?

I don't think there is one person I admire above anyone else. I take different elements of people I see and think if you could bottle those elements into one person that's who I would aspire to be. I have seen resilience, the ability to juggle a number of balls in the air, political negotiation, passion in a cause, expert knowledge, pragmatism and, most of all, common sense being displayed by a number of people throughout my career, all skills I admire. Those leaders who still have the ability to connect with those who work with them is critical, never lose sight of your background and where you came from. Policing, for officers, means that we all started in uniform at a PC level and I think that's a real strength to any organisation. It can, of course, be weakness if you don't allow talent and diversity to be encouraged and where you are in a position to make a difference, you do just that.

What was the best advice you received during your career? And who gave that advice?

'Run your own race' is my advice. If you try to see and always compete with others, you

will fail or at the very least be disappointed. Policing offers huge opportunities and if you are self-motivated, go that extra mile and have a 'sprinkle' of luck you will get to where you want to be. In the vast majority of cases, your destiny is in your hands and life is not a rehearsal so make the most of it.

Why have you decided to retire now?

It was the hardest decision I have had to take, I don't actually want to go! However, after 31 years with five years at Chief I think the time is right. Although of course in a privileged position, everyone looks at tax implications and a slow decrease in pensions as you continue to serve beyond 30 years. I have had a fantastic time all the way through my career and I certainly can't complain. I never for one moment thought I would end up as a Chief Constable and I will be forever grateful to everyone who has supported me.

Do you believe you leave the Force in a better place than it was when you became Chief?

I don't think that's for me to judge. I will leave that to the constabulary to hold its opinion on that one, however I hope I have made a difference. We have more officers than ever, we have a strong structure and I do get a genuine sense that the culture of the organisation is different. Crime is positive and we have made huge strides in some areas. There is still work to be done, not least off the back of our HMICFRS inspection last year, but I equally know how much effort has gone on to improve certain areas.

How would you like to be remembered in terms of your time with the Force?

I would like to be remembered as Chief who actually never lost sight of the officers and staff who work tirelessly for Cambridgeshire. I have tried my best to stay connected and be visible and approachable throughout my time here.

What plans do you have in retirement?

I have no real plans at present. I will have to do something simply to keep my sanity but I would like to spend more time with my family and three dogs and give myself more time to enjoy walking in the Peak District. That has been my 'escape' and 'release' over the years and kept me on the straight and narrow.

“ I HAVE HAD A FANTASTIC TIME ALL THE WAY THROUGH MY CAREER AND I CERTAINLY CAN'T COMPLAIN. I NEVER FOR ONE MOMENT THOUGHT I WOULD END UP AS A CHIEF CONSTABLE AND I WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE WHO HAS SUPPORTED ME. ”

Progress with Police Covenant



IT IS NOW 12 MONTHS SINCE THE POLICE COVENANT WAS ENSHRINED IN LAW, BUT PLENTY OF WORK STILL TO BE DONE

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom has welcomed the progress being made on the Police Covenant. But she said there was still plenty of work to be done after the covenant was signed into law last year.

Liz said: "It's been almost 12 months since the Police Covenant was put into law so it's pleasing to see that progress is being made - but there's lots of work still to do.

"It's something that the Federation campaigned tirelessly for, which recognises the unique position police officers have and their bravery, commitment and sacrifices in serving the public.

"It's vital that we get it right."

Liz's comments come as the body overseeing the establishment of the covenant said that three of its 11 original priorities have now been completed.

In its annual report, the Police Covenant Oversight Board said that the Officer and Staff Safety Review (OSSR), the assaults plan, and pre-deployment health support have all been signed off.

The OSSR was published in 2020 and two of its recommendations have been considered under the Police Covenant work.

It included working with the Home Office and Ministry of Justice to see if a new offence be created to specifically cover the use of a vehicle in assaults on officers, though it was felt these offences were covered under existing legislation.

The second recommendation centred on concerns around spitting and exposure to blood-borne viruses. Assault on an emergency worker where there's a threat or intent to transmit a disease has been included in the sentencing guidelines for the Assault on Emergency Workers (offences) Act 2018.

On the assaults plan, the report highlighted how Operation Hampshire is changing the culture in support of officers and staff.

It also said that forces have adopted the Police Federation's seven-point investigation plan for dealing with assaults against the police.

The pre-deployment mental health support has seen provision of mental health awareness in the police service training for all new starters rolled into the training framework, the report said.

“ THE COVENANT SHOULD BE CONSTANTLY EVOLVING TO RECOGNISE THE CHALLENGES OFFICERS AND STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES FACE, WHICH IS WHY I'M PLEASED TO SEE THE OVERSIGHT BOARD ADDING NEW PRIORITIES TO ITS WORK. ”

The College of Policing has also embedded wellbeing and resilience lessons from the Frontline Leadership Development Programme into the tutor constable curriculum.

The report also updates on the progress in other priority areas, and that three new priorities have been added. These are support for police leavers, NHS engagement and officer and staff roadside safety.

Liz said: "The covenant should be constantly evolving to recognise the challenges officers and staff and their families face, which is why I'm pleased to see the oversight board adding new priorities to its work. It shows that we have a duty to our own people as well as to the public."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Inspectors: know your rights

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is reminding inspectors and chief inspectors of their rights around rest days in lieu.

John Partington, National Board member and the PFEW's learning and development lead, has provided advice on the issue for inspecting in a new blog [Understanding rest days in lieu](#).

He said: "Rest days are there for you to enjoy but we all know that all too often they become interrupted due to the demands of the jobs we do."

John discusses what being interrupted on a rest day means, what inspectors and chief inspectors should do in those circumstances, and working excessive hours.

Pensions update

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has welcomed the Government's response to the consultation on the Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience (SCAPE) discount rate, which has resulted in an [update](#) to the Police Pension Scheme 1987 commutation factors.

This will directly and positively affect the pension benefits of police officers at the time of retirement by increasing the rate at which pension is converted into a commutation lump sum at retirement.

The new factors are effective from 3 April 2023, and PFEW acknowledges that the revised SCAPE discount rate and subsequent updated factors have come into immediate effect, without providing stakeholders with advance notice so they could make members aware.

While the Government has not allowed for the updated factors to be implemented with retrospective effect, members who are planning an imminent retirement (or retired on or after 3 April 2023) are advised to contact their pension administrator for further clarification and assistance.

Find more information about the [SCAPE discount rate methodology consultation](#).

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS?

Noise-induced hearing loss can drastically affect those who work in law enforcement

Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is a term used to describe hearing loss, deafness or tinnitus caused by exposure to excessive noise at work where insufficient or no training or ear protection has been provided. NIHL can have a significant impact on those who work in law enforcement, particularly those who use firearms, due to frequent exposure to extremely high levels of noise in their line of work.

Though hearing loss is a common symptom of age, it's important to note the distinct signs that indicate noise-induced hearing loss. Some signs to look out for include:

- **Difficulty hearing or understanding speech, particularly in environments with background noise.**
- **Tinnitus, which is a ringing, buzzing, hissing, or other sounds in one ear or both ears.**
- **Some people become more sensitive to loud noises. Everyday sounds that were previously tolerable may become uncomfortable or even painful.**
- **Difficulty accurately determining the direction a sound is coming from.**
- **Constantly increasing the volume of the television or radio.**
- **Asking others to speak louder or repeat themselves frequently.**

- **Fatigue or strain from listening for extended periods of time.**

All these signs and symptoms can vary in severity and differ from person to person. As police officers often deal with exposure to loud sounds such as gunshots, sirens, explosions and high-decibel events, this can and often does lead to damage being sustained to the sensitive structures of the inner ear, which can turn into noise-induced hearing loss.

Though symptoms differ, this could cause a permanent decrease in hearing sensitivity, making it more difficult for police officers to hear important sounds, such as verbal commands from colleagues or approaching emergency vehicles.

Hearing loss may also compromise an officer's situational awareness, making them less able to identify any potential threats or hazards. This can impact the ability to respond quickly and appropriately to dangerous situations, potentially jeopardising their safety and the safety of others. Hearing loss could even affect an officer's job performance, especially in tasks that require good hearing abilities, such as gathering witness statements, conducting interviews or participating in surveillance operations.

To minimise the risk of police officers developing noise-induced hearing loss, it's

important for police forces to implement hearing conservation programmes. These could include training in and the provision of hearing protection devices, regular hearing screenings, education on the risks of noise exposure and strategies to minimise exposure to loud sounds whenever possible. The law says that every employer has a duty of care to protect employees from suffering harm in the workplace, including noise induced injuries.

Police officers, like other employees, are protected by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. These regulations set out the standards and requirements for employers to manage and control noise in the workplace to prevent occupational hearing loss.

If a police officer believes that their hearing loss was caused or significantly worsened by their work environment, they may be eligible to make a claim for compensation.

Expert noise-induced hearing loss claims lawyers at Slater and Gordon will arrange for you to be examined by a medical professional to determine what proportion of your hearing loss is due to workplace exposures to noise, and on the basis of that independent medical opinion, you will be advised on whether you have a claim that can be pursued.



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'CUTS HAVE UNDERMINED POLICING'

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom says years of cuts have undermined policing as she called for greater investment and a fair pay award.

Liz said that the cuts during the years of austerity, the lack of a long-term funding strategy and poor pay had done more than anything to damage policing.

She was responding to a speech from Suella Braverman in which the Home Secretary said political correctness was hampering police and that officers should concentrate on "common sense policing".

Ms Braverman, who was speaking at the Public Safety Foundation think tank, said: "Common sense policing means more police on our streets.

"It means better police culture and higher standards. It means giving the public confidence that the police are unequivocally on their side, not pandering to politically correct preoccupations."

And the Home Secretary added: "Now I believe in the police. But the policing in which I believe isn't riven with political correctness, but enshrined in good old fashioned common sense."

She concluded: "If police chiefs

approached instilling a culture of political impartiality, with the same dedication which they approach instilling a culture of diversity and inclusion, I have no doubt that public confidence in policing would be materially improved."

Liz described the comments as an attempt to divert attention from the main issues facing policing of funding and pay.

She said: "Of course, most officers enter policing to fight crime, catch criminals and keep the public safe.

"However, for the Home Secretary to again use hard-working and dedicated officers to stoke her culture wars is unhelpful and divisive and is being used to draw attention away from years of underfunding and poor pay.

"It's the cuts to police numbers during the austerity years, real-term cuts to pay and the savaging of infrastructure that have done more damage to policing and police morale than anything else.

"This is why, as a Federation, we've been calling for a minimum 17 per cent pay rise for our members whose wages have slumped since 2000 to start to reverse the decline."

[Read Ms Braverman's speech in full.](#)

DIGITAL MEMORIAL TO FALLEN OFFICERS

The service and sacrifice of police officers who were killed on duty will be permanently recorded in digital form for future generations.

The UK Police Memorial is pressing ahead with its 'world first' digital remembrance portal that will pay tribute to the 4,500 police officers and staff who have given their lives to policing across the UK.

A spokesperson said: "The digital remembrance programme will tell the personal stories of the people behind the badge who have been killed whilst policing our communities, keeping us safe and defending our freedoms. It will celebrate lives lived. It will remember lives lost."

The online resource will draw on data from the Police Roll of Honour Trust (PRHT), and is being developed with other partners, the College of Policing, Staffordshire University, Accenture and the National Memorial Arboretum.

The most popular features identified by a survey of police officers and staff and families of fallen officers included the life stories of the fallen, with photographs, oral histories, video tributes and media coverage and the ability to pay tribute to family members, friends and colleagues.

Liz Groom, chair of Cambridgeshire Police Federation, said: "Society owes a debt of thanks to all the brave police officers who tragically lost their lives in the service of their community. We always say, 'they must never be forgotten', and this project will help us keep their memory alive for future generations.

"There's also the ability to add videos and comments, allowing loved ones and colleagues to contribute their own thoughts and memories, which I think is really special."

[Find out more about the project.](#)

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

A free bereavement counselling service is now available for Cambridgeshire Police Federation members who need support following the death of a colleague in the line of duty or by suicide.

Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service, has teamed up with bereavement support organisation Just 'B' to provide members and relatives with access to bereavement counselling.

The service is free and will be delivered face-to-face, online or on the phone.

It's funded by Oscar Kilo as part of its work to deliver the Police Covenant and increase the support for police officers and staff and their families.

A referral will most likely be made by the Force's occupational health or wellbeing team, following the usual process that is involved when a police officer or member of staff dies in the line of duty or by suicide.

If you feel you need additional bereavement or wellbeing support then please speak to your line manager or contact the Federation.

CHAIR VOICES CONCERN OVER TWO-TIER ENTRY ROUTE

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom has added her voice to criticism of a new non-degree officer entry route amid fears it could hit recruitment and training standards.

Liz said the proposals for a Level 5 learning programme – equivalent to a diploma of higher education (DipHE) – would create a two-tier entry system alongside the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEFQ) routes, which have been assessed as Level 6.

There are also concerns it could impact members' future career opportunities and pay.

Now Liz has called on the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and College of Policing to revisit the plans and ensure non-degree entry would still be accredited to educational Level 6.

Failure to do so, she said, would be against the founding principles of the PEQF.

Liz said: "While I agree the old Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) no longer met the needs of a modern police service, a two-tier

entry system is not the answer to replace it.

"I welcome a non-degree entry route into policing, but it needs to be assessed as Level 6 to ensure that standards of police constables are the same across the board.

"Creating a two-tier system risks reducing recruitment and training standards at a time when they have been under the spotlight like never before and we should be doing everything we can to raise them.

"This is why I'm calling on the NPCC and the college to revisit these proposals to ensure that entry standards are maintained and even raised, but certainly not diluted."

The new Level 5 (non-accredited) learning programme is being made available for forces as soon as possible but not later than 1 April 2024.

A number of forces are yet to engage with education partners about the impact of new standards and learning on existing Level 6 contractual obligations and await the College of Policing's further implementation guidance and the design of associated curricula.

The Police Federation for England Wales

said it was awaiting the equality impact assessment of the decision to introduce the non-degree entry route supporting Level 5 qualification but, in the meantime, urged the NPCC and the college to ensure any change in the policy ensures that the standards defining competence in the police constable role remain the same irrespective of the entry routes.

Police Federation national board member and professional development lead Paul Matthews also opposes the plans.

He said: "When the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, announced her plans for a new entry route last November, she did not envisage any reduction in the current learning standards.

"In fact, she stated that any new entry route would 'deliver officers of the highest calibre, which would complement the existing framework'.

"This proposed fourth route does not deliver what the Home Secretary stated. Instead, it opens the door for some officers to be trained to a lower standard than others."

NEURODIVERSITY: MORE WORK TO BE DONE

Cambridgeshire Police Federation chair Liz Groom says it's vital that policing is fully attuned to the requirements of neurodiverse colleagues.

Liz said that some police officers won't be aware they are neurodiverse as she called for a set of uniform standards to be introduced to support inclusivity, performance and assessment.

Liz said: "The police service is more aware of neurodiversity than we've ever been but there's still work to be done.

"There's a disparity from force to force in the provision for our neurodiverse colleagues. We need set guidelines so that everyone receives the adjustments and support required to do the job to the best of their ability.

"This would include standards to ensure inclusivity of neurodiverse colleagues, that they're supported in their role and that assessment is available for those officers who may be neurodiverse.

"Many of our colleagues will be neurodiverse and not even aware they are, so it's important that access to assessment is available so the appropriate adjustments

are there.

"A lack of support can lead to underperformance, absenteeism and even emotional and mental health issues."

Neurodiversity refers to the differences in the ways people's brains work and can refer to conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyscalculia and dyslexia. It's estimated that 7 million people in the UK live with dyslexia, 2.6m people live with ADHD, 750,000 people live with autism and that 6 per cent live with dyscalculia.

Paul Matthews, Police Federation of England and Wales National Board member and diversity lead, has blogged about neurodiverse representation in policing.

Paul said: "It's crucial that police officers and staff are able to access assessment and diagnosis opportunities so they might be better supported in the workplace and able to perform to the very best of their ability."

Paul said it was "disappointing" there was a disparity between forces in access to assessment and explained the Federation had asked the National Police Chiefs' Council to encourage forces to follow examples of best practice.

