Huge policing operations for Champions League finals
CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE

It’s time to re-invest in policing

By Steve Trigg, chair of South Wales Police Federation

They say a week is a long time in politics so the past seven years of austerity feel like a life-time in a police service that has been surviving in a state of poverty with officers condemned to work with unacceptable demands on both their professional and private lives.

Recent tragic events have made the public realise that, despite Government spin, we can’t really do more with less. They understand the pressures policing, in common with other public services, is under and I hope public opinion will eventually force the Government to listen and re-invest in policing, which includes looking seriously at salaries.

I was amazed to see how poorly our current Home Secretary performed at the annual national Police Federation conference. It was apparent Amber Rudd had little or no understanding of how all elements of policing feed into the intelligence picture to combat extremism and how budget cuts make it impossible for chief officers to deliver meaningful community policing while combating other emerging issues, such as cyber-crime and public protection concerns such as CSE.

It was also apparent she had no idea how the one per cent pay cap had affected police salaries over recent years. It was particularly galling that she tried to justify the 11 per cent increase for MPs and their protected pension rights by saying it had been recommended by an independent review body – exactly the system we used to have until the Government scrapped it so it could impose whatever pay settlement it chose.

She is more interested in protecting her ministerial post than challenging the Chancellor to gain a fair settlement on our behalf.

This is particularly hard to take when you consider the Government suddenly found £1 billion as part of a deal to stay in power – one for the ethical dilemma of the month?

You may not be aware but the Federation is in the final stages of an internal reform programme which will be underpinned by a change in Police Regulations later this year. These changes present an opportunity for us to be more visible on the front-line and I hope that in future we will be able to work more effectively locally, to assist and intervene in all issues that affect you, from misconduct and performance, to ill health and well-being, equality and flexible working, health and safety issues - in fact anything that affects officers and impacts on the efficient running of the Force.

Finally, our Chief Constable, Peter Vaughan, will be leaving us in the autumn and it would be remiss of me not to pen a few words of tribute to him.

When he took up post SWP was struggling towards the bottom of most national performance tables and this coincided with the Comprehensive Spending Review which severely affected our budgets. He was faced with some hugely difficult decisions to make, such as the A19 retirements, and I know he always tried to put people first in his decision-making.

One of his favourite slogans is ‘don’t let a crisis go to waste’ and, under his astute leadership, we have moved from being one of the most underperforming forces to one of the best. When you set that against the backdrop of austerity we face, by any measure he has done a remarkable job.

We may not have always agreed with everything he has done but I believe austerity has brought us closer now as an organisation from top to bottom than we have ever been and I hope you would join me in thanking him and wishing him well in the future.

Inevitably, to achieve the performance we now turn in, there have been, and will continue to be, casualties. The organisation runs white hot at times, just to maintain day to day policing, plus all the other demands placed on us as a strategic force and we need to consider how we can better support and assist officers who are looking over the precipice due to stress and high workloads.

I hope this is an area where we can work closely with the Force to develop interventions and strategies to provide help where it’s needed, a new prevent strategy for police and hope to work closely with the new Chief Constable to progress this piece of work.

I could go on and fill the magazine but if you have any issues you feel we could assist with or offer advice please contact us – take the time to find out who your local Fed rep is, engage with them, we’re here to help. As ever – stay safe out there.
Officers praised after Champions League success

South Wales officers should be proud of the way in which they responded to the challenges of policing the UEFA Champions League event hosted in Cardiff for the first time, according to Clare Biddlecombe, secretary of South Wales Police Federation.

The policing operation – Operation Draig Coch - was the biggest in South Wales’ history, with only the security for the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014 coming close.

“I am immensely proud of the way that our officers conducted themselves in the build-up to the finals and during the actual event,” says Clare.

“We are fully aware that there were issues and officers did experience some difficulties in terms of welfare breaks, getting their meals and attending briefings and these are all matters that we will be discussing with the Force.

“However, I would like to put on record my thanks to all officers – both within South Wales Police and from other forces who were part of the mutual aid contingent – for the professional way in which they conducted themselves.

“Their focus was, as ever, protecting the public, ensuring they were kept safe and making sure the event went ahead without a hitch. From that perspective, it was a hugely successful operation and the Force deserves credit for that.

“This was the biggest commercial event ever staged on our patch so we should not under-estimate the scale of this operation.”

More than 1,800 police officers worked the event including 23 PSUs – eight from South Wales Police, five from Avon and Somerset, one from Wiltshire, one from Gloucestershire and one from Gwent that travelled into force each day –while six PSUs stayed in force (three from Devon and Cornwall; two from Dyfed Powys and one from North Wales Police).

There was also mutual aid from firearms resources and other specialist teams. South Wales Police Federation was heavily involved during the build-up to the matches and throughout the policing operation, helping liaise with the Force, the command team and the membership.

Federation secretary Clare was joined at the event by South Wales chairman Steve Trigg and South Wales Police Federation workplace representative Leigh Godfrey along with Paul Laughlin (secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation), Vickie Day, secretary, and Gareth Thomas (both Gwent).

They offered round the clock support to officers while on duty. 

Continued on Page 4
The event

The Football Association of Wales successfully bid to host the UEFA Champions League men’s and women’s finals.

The men’s final, on Saturday 3 June in the National Stadium of Wales, was the largest sporting event in the world in 2017 with an average global audience of 200 million, the finalists were Juventus and Real Madrid with Juventus winning 4 – 1.

The women’s final was the biggest women’s club football game and took place at Cardiff City Stadium on Thursday 1 June 2017. After a 0 – 0 draw at half-time Lyon secured a 7 – 6 win on penalties against Paris St Germain. A global audience of five million watched the match.

The event is expected to generate an economic impact of £45 million to Cardiff and the wider region.

In numbers:

- 4,000 – the number of hotel rooms in Cardiff, compared with 100,000 rooms in other cities to have hosted the finals, resulting in many fans having to travel in and out of Cardiff on the of the final
- 100 – the number of private jets transporting high net worth individuals to Cardiff
- 25,000 – the number of supporters travelling to the event on day charter flights. Cardiff Wales Airport received 4 times as many passengers than ever before in a 24 hour period
- 24 – the number of high speed trains running from 23.00hrs to 04.00hrs back to London
- 10 – the percentage of the UK coach network being used to transport event attendees
- 1,800 – the number of police officers working this event including 23 PSUs. There was also mutual aid from firearms resources
- 12,000 – the number of accredited staff working at the event
- 1,800 – the number of staff working in the broadcast compound
- 2,000 – the number of catering staff working at Bute Park and Cardiff Castle
- 1,500 – the number of ‘Champions’ (volunteers) to help supporters.
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE EVENT

Federation on hand

Officers were able to talk to Federation reps throughout the event and to raise any concerns they had.

“It was really useful to be on the ground alongside officers,” says Clare Biddlecombe, secretary of South Wales Police Federation.

“While in some cases we were not able to immediately address the concerns, it does mean that we have a real feel for the difficulties some officers faced and we will be able to discuss these – and the findings of our officer survey – with the chief officer team and other people involved in major events of this kind in the future.

“Obviously, our primary concern is the welfare of our members which is crucial if they are to provide an effective policing service but we also appreciate that this operation was a huge undertaking for the Force.”

Other matters raised by officers talking to the Federation reps at the event included:

- Insufficient briefings
- Lack of resilience resources
- Inadequate advice on allowances and over-time
- Insufficient radio batteries and charging facilities.

However, many officers did say that the transport provided was good, that the food at the feeding centres was also satisfactory and that the enhanced lunch packs were also suitable.

Clare concludes: “The Champions League was a large scale public facing operation which was well received by the public and delivered safely and professionally without any major incident.

“Despite some of the issues encountered, I am full of praise for the professionalism and flexibility of officers who policed the event. There were many positives from an operational policing perspective, not least the fact that officers provided public reassurance and showed great community engagement.”

Learning the lessons

The Federation circulated a survey to all officers involved in Operation Draig Goch to find out their views on the policing of the event.

The results and recommendations from the Federation were discussed at a debrief on Monday 17 July.

“The survey asked a number of questions relating to officers’ deployment instructions and welfare, as well as asking their views on good practice and aspects which did not go as well as expected,” says Clare Biddlecombe, secretary of South Wales Police Federation, “The aim is for lessons to be learnt so that these matters can be taken into consideration for the planning of future events.”

The survey was conducted in conjunction with the operation’s Gold Commander Chief Superintendent Jonathan Edwards and was open for 10 days to give officers plenty of time to have their say.

It featured 22 questions covering deployment, briefings, welfare issues and over-time.

“We are grateful to all of those officers – around 500 in total – who took the time to fill out the survey. We appreciate there were some difficulties during the policing of this event but, once again, I would like to thank officers for the professional way in which they responded to the challenges they faced so that they could provide an effective policing service.”

Brave duo saved woman’s life

Two quick-thinking South Wales Police officers who saved a woman’s life have been nominated for the national Police Bravery Award.

In the early hours of a March morning last year PCs Christopher Bluck and Rhys Edwards, who are both patrol officers based in Bridgend, were let in to a property where they could see smoke coming from under a bedroom door which had been barricaded by furniture.

Without hesitation, they forced entry into the room, where they discovered a woman sat among a pile of burning clothes and paper, with her clothing alight. More alarmingly, she was in possession of a firearm and was threatening to harm herself.

Without any time to consider whether the gun was real, the two dragged the woman to safety on the street where they administered first aid while the fire service put out the rest of the fire.

They recovered the gun – which was discovered to be a BB gun that fired metal ball bearings, two of which the woman had shot in to her mouth – and drove her to the hospital where she was treated for her injuries and put in to the care of health services.

As part of their ongoing investigations, the officers also recovered two more firearms.

Steve Trigg, chairman of South Wales Police Federation, who nominated the officers, said: “These brave officers put themselves in harm’s way by entering a dangerous fire. Not only that, they were then faced with a woman, surrounded by fire, pointing a gun in her mouth. Without their quick thinking and dedication to duty, someone or all of them could have lost their lives.”

The brave officers attended a Downing Street reception and a gala dinner at which the national winner and regional winners were announced. More details will appear in our September magazine.
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A crowd of rank and file police officers heard their Federation chair make a plea to the new Government – make policing a priority.

Steve White addressed the Federation’s national conference in a keynote speech delivered to Home Secretary Amber Rudd.

Steve said: "...politics and politicians will move on, but policing, its officers and people’s safety will always be needed. No matter who is in Government. Put policing before politics, put the people before politics, and put those who pledge to serve before politics."

The chair then turned his attention to the Federation’s Protect The Protectors campaign, which received cross-party support in Parliament earlier this year.

He told the Home Secretary: ‘Many of your colleagues from all political parties were vocal and stated their support for a change in legislation. Many expressed support for a change to see harsher sentences for those convicted of assaulting officers.

“And so, today I ask you and every politician seeking to be elected – can we have a firm commitment to make this happen?

“We want a commitment that you will give the police officers of England and Wales the support and protection needed to do their job. That is, support in numbers. Support in equipment. And support in law. For, without that support, without the numbers needed, we can’t continue doing everything.”

He continued: "When she was Home Secretary, the Prime Minister told us we should have a single mission – to fight crime. We said it then, and I say it again now, policing is so much more than just fighting crime."

"Tell the family of a suicidal man with mental health issues making threats to end his life that it’s the NHS they need; it’s not one for the police.

"Tell the elderly victim of a burglary seeking comfort and reassurance that time is money and the job of the police is to fight crime and capture an offender, rather than counsel them as a victim.

"Home Secretary, you cannot put a price on the value of policing. And no Government can cut tens of thousands of police officers and expect us to pretend that it won’t make a difference. For it does.”

And while speaking about how the police could not ‘do everything’ he called on the newly elected Government to ask the public what they wanted from the police.

He went on to mention provisions needed for officers to effectively do their job – including a wider roll-out of Taser. The new X2 Taser model is approved but many forces are struggling to fund its introduction.

He spoke about police pursuits and how the current test of dangerous driving is ‘outdated, misinterpreted at best and downright ridiculous at worst in the way that it applies to police officers’.

He called for exemptions in law to be put in place to ensure that an officer, doing their duty and engaging in a response or pursuit in a police vehicle, is not unfairly processed through the court.

Police pay was also brought into focus with Steve urging the Home Secretary to remove the shackles from the Police Remuneration Review Body, allow it to take the evidence the Federation provides and decide for itself what pay award officers should receive.

“We have evidenced the need for an uplift of 2.8 per cent. The difference between an increase of one per cent and 2.8 per cent - £90 million. While that may sound like a lot, in the scheme of Government budgets it’s negligible,” he explained.

The chair closed his speech by summarising what he and the Federation want from the Government: a national system of welfare provision for police officers, legal protections for officers doing their job, the right protective equipment for officers, no further budget cuts, an immediate halt in the reduction of officer numbers, and a progressive culture and an open environment where the police service learns from its mistakes.

He said: ‘And finally, we want a Government that supports the police. Not just in words. In actions too.”

And concluded: "We are proud to be British police officers. We are proud to do our duty. All we ask is that Government does its duty too. And Protects The Protectors.”
‘It’s not for me to tell the police how to do their jobs’

A staggering 4.5 million hours of police time have been saved thanks to a cut in red-tape – according to Home Secretary Amber Rudd.

She made the claim during her speech to a packed hall on Day 2 of the annual conference in Birmingham.

And she said that if her party was re-elected on 8 June more top officer jobs will be opened up to those outside of policing.

“The public don’t pay their taxes so that the police sit in their office filling out meaningless forms,” she said, “And you didn’t come into policing to waste your time on paperwork when you could be out serving the communities you swore to protect. So we have cut pointless red tape. With 4.5 million hours of police time saved – that’s the equivalent of 2,100 police officers no longer sitting in a back office and instead fighting crime in their community.

‘And we’ve cut the target culture. No longer does the Home Office send dozens of ‘policy’ documents each year with thousands of central diktats. It’s not for me to tell the police how to do their jobs.’

She went on to pledge that as long as she was Home Secretary there would be no constant interfering from Westminster.

‘Without that constant interference, we’ve seen the proportion of police officers on the front-line rise,” she said, “With priorities now set by locally elected PCCs and delivered by you, ensuring once again that the ‘police are the public and the public are the police.’

Ms Rudd said her party had protected the protectors, saying: “You asked us to change the law so that anyone who kills a cop gets a mandatory life sentence. We listened, and now anyone convicted of murdering an officer faces a life sentence.

“You asked us to do more to stop police officers doing the work of a doctor or nurse, caring for mentally ill members of the public. And we’ve taken steps to significantly restrict the circumstances in which a police station may be a ‘place of safety’ with £15 million invested into health-based alternatives.”

She continued: ‘And if I’m re-appointed as your Home Secretary I will continue to work with the health secretary so that the police do not do the jobs of other public servants, so you are not the service of first resort.

“You asked me to bring in a new two shot Taser gun, and I’ve done that because you keep us safe and it’s right we keep you safe too. You asked us to better fund mental health services for officers up and down the country. And if I’m returned to this post in 22 days, signing off that bid, Steve, will be one of the first things I do.”

Her first ever engagement after becoming Home Secretary in July was the Police Bravery Awards – which is where she was when she heard about the Nice terror attack.

She told the room: ‘That moment will stay with me for the rest of my life. As I watched our brave police officers being recognised for their extraordinary acts of courage, the horrible events on the streets of Nice were unfolding. The best of our values, embodied in the actions of our policemen and women, set in stark relief against the very worst of human behaviour.

“We owe you, the police, an incredible debt, for the courage and bravery you exhibit in the line of duty. For your willingness to put yourself in harm’s way, day after day, in order to protect the rest of us.”

She went on to pay tribute to PC Keith Palmer and the other officers who have lost their lives in the past year, before pledging her commitment to support the new UK Police Memorial.

And she insisted the decisions her party had made which weren’t well received by officers had been in the best interests of the country.

“You haven’t agreed with the changes we’ve made to pay and pensions, but they were right for the country and the public to tackle the huge deficit we inherited. You haven’t agreed with the drive for greater efficiency in policy budgets, but it’s been right for the country and the public,” the Home Secretary told officers.

“You haven’t agreed with the steps we’ve taken to bring more people from outside policing into the force. But it’s been right for the country and the public. And if the Conservatives are re-elected we will go further and open up the very top jobs in policing so that we get the broadest possible skills and talent at the very top of our police forces.”

‘Amber Rudd trotted out many phrases used by Theresa May to the point of being ‘I am sick of the same old conversation’ - Government dictates financial cuts and then say it is down to the Chief Constables to spend the money where they wish and the Government washes its hands of the consequence of those financial cuts.

“As a panel speaker she interacts well with conference and is sharp in her parrying statements. As is often a problem when an election is in the horizon the keynote speech can be a party political broadcast.” Caroline Grisley
Amber Rudd was put under tough questioning from Federation reps when she took part in her first Q and A session.

Delegates wasted no time in raising their concerns on issues including pay, funding, mental health, spit guards and demand. Here is a selection of the questions and answers.

Steve White: ‘...Are we going to see investment in the police service? Because we either invest or divest and you can’t keep fudging it and saying it’s down to the chiefs when they don’t have the money.’
AR: ‘We have made a commitment to maintain the police budget from 2015-2019/20 and I expect that to continue... I believe it’s right to say the police should be locally run and that chief constables working with PCCs is the right way forward.’
SW: ‘I think you’re saying ‘no’.’

On a pay rise, AR: ‘It’s not for me to offer the pay rise. It’s important to have a remuneration committee. The public sector pay rise has been fixed at one per cent and I understand that’s difficult and unwelcome but we need to have a stronger economy so there has to be public sector pay restraint. The pay restraint will remain until 2019/20.’
SW: ‘Does that include politicians?’
AR: ‘The expenses scandal meant MPs’ pay was put into the hands of an independent regulator and ministers’ salaries were cut.’
Ian Collins: ‘Give me a moment while I just weep quietly over that at the podium.’

John Apter, Hampshire: ‘...the reality is that the Force Welfare Fund, a charity, is now seeing officers come for food vouchers to put food on their table or fuel in their car to get to work. Is that right for the public and the country?’
AR: ‘I’m sorry to hear that. I understand that must be difficult. An average officer’s earnings is about £40,000 (there was lots of sniggering and scoffing at this point). Again, I don’t want to make misleading commitments about pay but we have to make sure we get the borrowing numbers down and get back to a stronger economy. We have to... make sure we continue to limit expenditure to protect the economy which will be better for you and your families.’

Nigel Mortimer, West Mercia: ‘What can you do to try to influence and cut down the length of time officers find themselves under investigation because the CPS can’t be bothered to read some files or the IPCC can’t do the investigation?’
AR: ‘I’d like to see IPCC acting more quickly. I think it’s disgraceful that officers are kept on suspension for so long. We have set up a new board to replace the IPCC and it’s not just a change to the name on the door, there are more funds, new staff and a new direction to make sure the processes are much swifter and I’ll be keeping a close eye to make sure that happens.’

Louise Bates, Bedfordshire: ‘Assaults while on duty result in mental health issues so officers are away from work, leaving fewer officers to deal with the workload. How will you support officers injured on duty?’
AR: ‘Mental health is incredibly important and the Prime Minister has said there will be new legislation put in place for mental health issues at work. Steve has put a bid into the Police Transformation Fund and I hope to be able to support that if I’m re-elected.’
SW: ‘The issue of welfare in the service is gaining traction at long last. But we need to make sure that officers, wherever they are, benefit from a level of care regardless of issues within their force. I think this will be truly transformational if it works and I’ll hold the Home Secretary to what she’s said in terms of supporting the bid if she’s re-elected.’

Paul Bennett, Northumbria: ‘Do you accept there is a direct link between officer workload, mental health and morale and what are you going to do to help us?’
AR: ‘I would acknowledge that link in any form of work, any walk of life and in policing on the front-line and with events we’ve seen recently, even more so, yes.’

AJ Secker, Avon & Somerset: ‘We want you to tell the public that we don’t have the capacity to deal with your incidents. Our Chief Constables have to tell the public but we want you to tell them, we want you to be honest with them and tell them we’re 20,000 cops down so we can’t go to some of their cries for help because of your policies.’
AR: ‘The independent crime survey has stated very clearly that, until the recent rise in violent crime over the last year, which is a different issue, crime has fallen by a third. Also, the PEEL reports show different areas having different successes so some areas are able to have strong responses and they are not the forces with the largest amounts of money but they have got excellent leadership. So I don’t agree it’s all about numbers and money, it’s about great leadership being able to deliver with a tighter budget.’

Nick Smart, West Yorkshire: ‘(Chief Constables) don’t have the money to deal with demand. Will you give us more money for more cops? This is happening everywhere and if you’re being told it’s not happening, you need to change your advisors.’
AR: ‘I’m sorry to hear the description of your force. I have visited forces over the past eight or nine months now and I haven’t seen that situation.’

Nick: ‘Until you tell other agencies not to place the burden of first resort service on us, until you resolve that, we are always on the back foot.’
AR: ‘We are trying to address the issue of making sure the police isn’t the agency for every issue. I accept your invitation to come to West Yorks if I’m in position after 8 June.

Andy Symonds, Norfolk: ‘We’re relying on officers’ goodwill because HR cannot fill the gaps. We are firefighting and officers have had enough.’
AR: ‘I don’t have an answer to that but when I go on a tour around after 8 June, I’ll come to see you...’
Andy: ‘But when you arrive at a force they’ve probably got officers on over-time they wouldn’t normally have and jobs will be withheld while you’re touring round so I implore you to put a surprise visit in and see what is actually going on in forces.’
AR: ‘Andy, you’re going to be my first surprise visit.’

Phill Matthews, Nottinghamshire: ‘Can I ask you to show your support for our members and police officers up and down the country to devote some Parliamentary time for looking at increasing sentences for those that assault our members, the police officers out there trying to keep you all safe?’
AR: ‘All assaults on public servants are treated as an aggravated crime so sentencing already reflects that and we have the legislation to do that. But I will keep it under review.’
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Standing ovation for MP who tried to save Keith Palmer

Delegates gave Tobias Ellwood, the MP who so memorably went to the aid of PC Keith Palmer after the Westminster terrorist attack in March, two standing ovations when he addressed conference.

Officers stood to applaud Mr Ellwood after he was welcomed on stage by National Federation chair Steve White who said officers were touched by the efforts he had made on 22 March.

Mr Ellwood was visibly moved after being presented with the Police Federation shield and coat of arms.

He said: ‘I was just sorry that I couldn’t, and those with me couldn’t, do more to save Keith Palmer’s life but we owe you such a debt of gratitude for what you do day in day out and it’s very humbling for me to receive this award.’

He added: ‘What came home to me after the Westminster incident was just how closely knit your fraternity is and just how you don’t know what is round the corner, you really don’t, and yet every day you put your uniforms on and stand in harm’s way so we can continue our work.’

When these events occur - tragic and rare, thankfully that they are, we don’t just carry on, it gives us even more determination to defeat this sort of extremism in the way that we know how, to defend our values and make sure we stand up to this so the terrorist does not win and that is something that resonated right across Westminster,’ he explained.

Mr Ellwood said his thoughts continued to be with Keith Palmer’s family, friends and colleagues and concluded by paying tribute to all police officers saying: ‘Thank you for the work you do day in, day out. It’s not said enough but it is appreciated.’

Delegates gave him another standing ovation as he left the conference.

Diane Abbott under fire for spit guard scepticism

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott came under fire from delegates for her sceptical views on spit guards during her conference session.

Ms Abbott delivered a speech in which she praised police for their work in a difficult climate and reaffirmed the Labour Party’s commitment to introduce an extra 10,000 officers if they won the General Election.

But she was put on the spot during a question and answers session, having been cautious towards the use of spit guards in the past.

She explained that she needed to see more evidence on the health implications of using them before she was prepared to back a nationwide introduction.

She said: ‘I have been looking at the evidence in relation to spit guards and I continue to look at that evidence. I have never said I am against them in principle but like any fresh equipment or power, I want to see the evidence of what they would do, particularly in relation to the health risk.

‘Among the groups that I have consulted with are groups who represent those with Hepatitis C and those with HIV, and they argue that you don’t catch Hepatitis C or HIV from being spat at. It’s about looking at the research and coming to a view.’

Officers argue the very act of being spat upon should be enough to warrant protection for police, whatever the risk of infection may be.

Ms Abbott then claimed the Met could be the first to use them – clearly unaware that around half of the forces in England and Wales already do.

Che Donald, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) lead on firearms said he was astonished by her comments.

‘Not only was she ill-informed, she was ill-advised and for some of those comments, I stood with my mouth open because I could not believe what I was hearing from the shadow home secretary,’ he said.

‘I would rather be punched in the face than spat at. It’s unacceptable, it’s a blight on society and it needs to be eradicated. If it takes education to stop people doing this then so be it. Anyone who comes to work and puts their life on the line like our officers do on a daily basis deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

‘And if we’re going to be spat at, and our assault figures show that it happens on a regular basis, then we need to have the appropriate protections there to protect it from happening further.’

Facilitator Ian Collins was applauded by delegates when he offered some clarity on the use of spit guards.

The shadow home secretary, in answer to a question on the issue, said she wanted to see evidence as to what they would do, particularly in relation to health risks.

Ian said: ‘Let me help you out, I am not an expert on this but I think the theory is if someone spits in your face you use the spit guard to stop them doing that.’

● Three weeks after the end of conference, it was announced that Diane Abbott was facing a ‘period of ill-health’ and was being replaced as shadow home secretary. She has since returned to the role.

Our Rep Says...

‘... a disappointment, she came across as very nervous maybe of conference but did not speak well and was again found to be thin on detail when probed. Sadly, certain questions posed were done so in a rude and unprofessional way which does the Federation no favours.’ Caroline Grisley

LET ME HELP YOU OUT, I AM NOT AN EXPERT ON THIS BUT I THINK THE THEORY IS IF SOMEONE SPITS IN YOUR FACE YOU USE THE SPIT GUARD TO STOP THEM DOING THAT.
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Delegates seemed unconvinced when the then police minister Brandon Lewis claimed crime had fallen by a third since 2010.

Making his conference debut having taken over the post last summer, Mr Lewis took part in the conference’s simply titled Political Session.

He acknowledged that there were now 20,000 fewer officers than there were in 2010 and said: “As these police officer numbers have changed we’ve actually seen crime fall by about a third since 2010.”

While officers seemed to laugh at his claim, he did admit recorded crime had increased but said it was a good thing as it showed victims of crime had more confidence in coming forward in the first place.

He started his speech by saying he wanted to focus on three key areas – professionalisation, IT and Protect The Protectors but first paid tribute to PC Keith Palmer who he said had given his life in the line of duty and that he was owed a debt of gratitude before going on to praise all officers who he said risked their lives to ‘enable us to be safe and feel safe’.

“We truly do have the best police service in the world,” he told delegates, adding that the Government’s reform programme had been about recognising the professionalism in evidence in policing every day.

● In the cabinet re-shuffle after the General Election, Mr Lewis was appointed as immigration minister and his police minister portfolio was passed to Nick Hurd who at the start of July, as debates increased around the lifting of the public sector pay rise cap, said the matter was under ‘active discussion’. He had been largely silent on policing up until this point.

Yvette Cooper said she believed the country stood at a crucial moment for policing and security ahead of the upcoming General Election.

The former shadow home secretary called for more immediate work to be done to help the police service deal with the new challenges it faces in tackling crime and protecting communities.

Ms Cooper was invited to speak at conference as the chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee working on the inquiry into the Future of Policing.

Ms Cooper praised the work of officers across the country and paid tribute to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

She also welcomed the Federation’s work on officer assaults.

“Your work on the Protect The Protectors campaign is immensely important to make sure that the police are not stretched to the limits,” she explained.

Ms Cooper said she disagreed with claims by Theresa May, when Home Secretary, that the purpose of policing is crime, no more, no less.

“The purpose of policing is never less and is always so much more about the security and safety of our public and making sure we have strong and resilient communities and keeping people safe for now and in the future,” she pointed out.

South Wales Police Federation secretary Clare Biddlecombe.

Emma Hawksworth of Slater and Gordon solicitors gave an input on parental leave during the Protecting Our Women break-out session.

Parental leave was launched two years ago but has had very little take up. Emma gave an insight into its provisions, the benefits, pitfalls and financial benefits. It is a complex topic but Emma gave the information in a concise and direct manner and was able to answer all questions from a basis of broad knowledge. She also provided links and guidance. - Slater and Gordon and the Federation have produced a factsheet with more development training being planned later in the year.

Laura Jane Fowler, the Federation in-house solicitor, then gave an input on part-time working, highlighting the changes and misunderstandings that currently exist. Although a heavy information feed, it was given in a light-hearted and simplified manner and again there is follow-up information on the College of Policing website and links to the Federation’s in-house legal team.

This is an essential input but as time was restricted needed to be squeezed in.

‘A crucial moment for policing’
Holly Lynch’s hopes of introducing a South Wales Police Federation (SWPF) bill to Parliament after the General Election.

She told the Federation’s national conference that there should be increased police numbers and stiffer sentences for those who assault them. With the help of the Federation, she has drafted new legislation which will lead to tougher sentences and better protection if adopted.

Also addressing the conference, the chair of West Yorkshire Police Federation, Nick Smart, agreed something needed to be done quickly as he believed that police officers had become ‘society’s punch bags’ and that there was ‘no deterrent’ for those who assault them within current legislation.

Ms Lynch has been a strong advocate of stiffer sentences for those who assault police officers, staff and other emergency service workers since she went out on patrol with the West Yorkshire Police in her constituency and saw exactly what officers have to deal with.

She told delegates she was so scared for an officer’s safety at one stage during an altercation that she called 999 from the police car to request back-up.

“I saw for myself how quickly situations can escalate and how vulnerable officers are when they are out on their own,” she said.

“To assault an officer shows complete disregard for law and order and our shared values. If officers are not safe, then our communities are not safe.

“If an officer is assaulted at any time, it must be recorded and must be subject to a robust investigation. Officers must have the confidence that those involved will be investigated and prosecuted accordingly.

‘An assault on an officer is an assault on society. This severity of violence directed at police officers is just unacceptable.

‘With the Federation, we have looked at drafting a new piece of legislation. My bill would open up much tougher sentences and the second part of that bill will deal with the hideous acts of spitting and biting.

‘These changes need to be on the agenda of every candidate seeking election so that this issue dominates the agenda in Parliament after 8 June,” she added. “We need to restore and protect the brave men and women behind the uniforms.

Nick Smart said that everyone in the room needed to put pressure on those in power to make urgent changes after the election.

‘At last year’s conference Theresa May said that some of the sentences (for assaulting officers) were too soft and that was wrong. But 12 months later, we are still fighting for officers’ rights and stiffer deterrents, for spit guards, for increased roll-out of Taser, for protection for drivers – and it’s quite a frustrating thing to constantly plead for something that should already be there,” he said.

‘There is stuff going on to cops on a daily basis and it is stuff that the public don’t see. It’s a sacrifice that they are making and a lot of the time, the sentences do not reflect the physical and mental injuries sustained.

‘Less than 10 per cent of offenders get a custodial sentence. That is not justice. Our cops don’t think it and that is why they don’t bother recording it because they have no faith in the criminal justice system.

‘The vast majority of MPs agree with us – so that begs the question: why is it so damn hard to change legislation to bring in stiffer sentences? It is our responsibility to continue the debate.

‘We are calling for stiffer sentences. If there is no deterrent, how are people going to change their behaviour? Assaults are going up and more violent assaults are going up. Something needs to change.

“We have drafted legislation for the Home Office. It’s there to go. It’s there to go for aggravated assault on a police officer. We are in a position where MPs will listen to us and listen to what we are doing. My plea to you is help us campaign for this for the right reasons. We all need to put pressure on those in power.”

Speaking at the end of the discussion on the Protect The Protectors campaign, a West Midlands officer, who endured injections, medication and ‘six months of worry’ after being spat upon by an assailant, has also called for politicians to help change legislation to give police more protection.

Holly Lynch’s hopes of introducing a Private Members’ Bill in Parliament were thwarted. Her bill was 20th on the list so unfortunately there was no time for it to be presented.

However, Chris Bryant, MP, who was first on the list, has included Protect The Protectors Bill in his section along with five other Bills, and asked the public to vote on which they want him to take forward.

TO ASSAULT AN OFFICER SHOWS COMPLETE DISREGARD FOR LAW AND ORDER AND OUR SHARED VALUES. IF OFFICERS ARE NOT SAFE, THEN OUR COMMUNITIES ARE NOT SAFE.
PC recalls spit dripping off his face

A West Midlands officer, who endured injections, medication and ‘six months of worry’ after being spat upon by an assailant, has called for politicians to help change legislation to give police more protection.

PC Mike Bruce told the Federation’s national conference in Birmingham that he had spit dripping off his face after an incident outside a pub in Holbrooks, Coventry in April last year. His colleague, PC Alan O’Shea, had blood spat in his face when he came to help.

It was the start of a long process of tests to make sure that neither officer had contracted HIV or Hepatitis B or C and also led to PC Bruce’s two children, aged one and nine, requiring blood tests too.

None of that worry would have had to have endured had legislation been in place to make the arrested man take a blood test to see if he had any of the diseases that could be contracted.

And PC O’Shea’s ordeal would not have happened either had PC Bruce had a spit guard at his disposal. West Midlands Police are currently discussing that possibility.

“Myself and Alan were just about to go off duty when we heard an almighty scream of a back-up call over the radio from a response officer,” said PC Bruce. “When we arrived, I saw a colleague struggling with two men, a father and son.

“I pulled the father away and he started throwing punches and kicking me. We went on the floor and I was trying to restrain him but he turned round, looked me in the eye and spat in my face. It went in my left eye and down my mouth. I had spit dripping off my face. It was disgusting. I would rather have been punched in the face.

“PC O’Shea came over and was acting as a peace-maker. The guy had a bit of blood in his mouth and spat that blood in Al’s face. If we had the spit guards, I would have pulled it out after I had been spat on and that would have protected Al.

“We were carted off to hospital because it went in our mouths and eyes and was treated as a needle injury. We had injections and medications to stop the onset of possible HIV and Hepatitis B and C.

“There was six months of worry. Within my first month of medication, the GP told me I tested positive for Hepatitis B, which later proved to be a false reading.

At the time, my whole world caved in. My wife and I were thinking about having a third child and I thought we were never going to be able to do that because of a positive test. My one and nine-year-olds had to have blood tests and Al and I went back every two weeks for more blood tests.

“If there was legislation in place for the prisoner to have a blood test, it would have stopped all of that worry but he is under no obligation. He was charged with assault on me and Al. He got a suspended sentence and had to pay me £250 and Al £500.

“These spit guards are solely there so that if someone is spitting or trying to bite, there is something there to protect us. I would invite politicians to come out with us and see what goes on. It’s about getting out there and educating them.”

**Force’s pledge on officer assaults**

**HEDDLU DE CYMRU - SOUTH WALES POLICE**

**ASSAULT ON POLICE OFFICERS**

INVESTIGATION STANDARDS: WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU

**SEVEN POINT PLAN**

1. Assaults on police officers and police staff should be investigated with the same care, compassion and commitment as an assault on a member of the public. This sounds obvious, but too often our response to assaults on officers and staff can be rushed or treated as secondary to other offences.

2. The Victim Code applies to all victims and therefore to assaults on police officers and staff. Complying with the Victim Code means keeping the victim updated, discussing outcome options, and taking account of the victim’s point of view before imposing an outcome. This is crucial because we know that we don’t always get our response right, with assaulted officers and staff reporting dissatisfaction and even resentment.

3. The assaulted officer must never be the OIC for the investigation into their own assault. This is not appropriate on any level and even taking statements from witnesses may be inappropriate. The integrity of the investigation and the impartiality of the officer could be called into question, which could undermine the case and/or heighten the impact on the victim.

4. Victims recover better and more quickly if they receive the right welfare and supervision. This also helps to avoid long-term negative consequences. The assaulted person’s supervisor should meet with them as soon as it is practical to do so. The victim may downplay the impact on them, but supervisors must recognise the potential effects of the incident.

5. The supervisor must ensure that the senior manager is informed to provide continuity of welfare support. The Police Federation must also be contacted to provide valuable additional support to the victim.

6. The assaulted officer and the supervisor must complete the F64b form. It will not always be possible for the victim to do this, in which case another person can complete the report.

7. To achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be presented. You should use Victim Personal Statements and whoever is investigating the assault needs to fully understand the “points to prove” for assaults on police officers or staff. An officer’s self-written statements, provided straight after the events, could be made in haste and might not contain all of the key facts. As a result, cases sent for prosecution sometimes fail to meet basic evidential needs.

**CADW DE CYMRU’N DDIOGEL - KEEPING SOUTH WALES SAFE**

South Wales Police has produced a seven-point plan setting out how it will handle assaults on police officers and staff.
Doggled determination seems to have paid off for Tim Rogers, the national Federation’s response driving lead, who has been spearheading a campaign for a change in the law to give better protection to police drivers.

West Mercia’s Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, roads policing lead at the National Police Chiefs’ Council, signalled at conference that he would work closely with the Federation on the issue.

Tim was making a reluctant return to the conference stage, having outlined the Federation’s campaign at conference last year he had been hoping for more progress in the intervening year – given that the Federation has been calling for a change in the law for seven years.

Instead he had found more officers were being prosecuted for simply doing their job.

Heading a panel made up of Mr Bangham and Mark Aldred, a barrister and former police officer involved in the campaign, Tim introduced the session explaining the lack of legal protection for officers in pursuit or response drives.

The current legislation means that regardless of their training and experience, they are judged by the standards of the ‘careful and competent driver’ who is unlikely to go through a red light, cross the wrong side of bollards and so on. This means those engaging in a response or pursuit are vulnerable to a prosecution charge of dangerous or careless driving.

The current guidelines, Tim said, were unsatisfactory and unworkable leaving officers risking their liberty and livelihood.

“We are not asking for you to be able to drive carelessly and dangerously,” he told delegates, “But the training you get has to be reflected in roads policing legislation.”

The Federation is planning to write to all police drivers to warn them of all the risks they face. The Federation’s suggested amendment to wording was, Tim said, seen as ‘a sensible starting point’ by many people.

CC Bangham gave a commitment to working with the Federation to ensure that police drivers get the best training and agreed that pursuit drivers needed better protection.

He said: “There’s a possibility of a law change, but it will take a long time. The DPP guidance needs to be changed to better reflect the realities of police driving so we can work towards the very best protection for officers.”

But Mr Aldred pointed out that the DPP guidance had already been changed to reflect the need for protection, in conjunction with the Federation a few years ago.

“It’s not about the guidance. Officers don’t get charged with running a red light - if something happens, it gets dressed up as dangerous or careless driving, and that’s the problem. The issue with guidance is it’s just that, guidance,” he told conference.

- The Police Federation of England and Wales has now written to all members advising them to drive in a way which is lawful and not undertake manoeuvres which could be considered careless or incompetent.

The letter explains that most emergency response and pursuit drives are illegal since drivers will contravene traffic signs and exceed speed limits and warns that police drivers must drive to the standard of the careful and competent driver since this is what they will be judged by.

The Federation continues to seek an urgent change in the law.

Merseyside police officer James Ellerman also gave a presentation at conference, talking about his own experiences of being prosecuted for dangerous driving after preventing a man who had been riding a motorcycle recklessly in Liverpool returning to the city centre by knocking him from the vehicle using his police van.

He talked about the stress he went through during the investigation, the sleepless nights, shaking with fear at the thought of being sent to prison and the fact that the up and coming trial had overshadowed the birth of his second daughter. His life, he said, was put on hold.

He explained that he felt he had no alternative but, using his knowledge, training and experience to cause the collision. He feared someone would be injured or killed if the motorcyclist was not stopped.

“I had to stop him returning to the city, I couldn’t do nothing,” said James, explaining that he felt he had to fulfil his duties of protecting the public, protecting property and that the motorcyclist posed a risk to the public.

On arresting the motorcyclist, he found he was riding a stolen bike and was disqualified from driving.

He thought that would be the end of it but it was just the beginning. He was served with gross misconduct papers and prosecuted.

The judge finally cleared him, saying of James’ intervention ‘he was damned if he did and damned if he didn’t’.

A life on hold...

Tim Rogers, the national Federation’s response driving lead.

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We experience extremes. But police officers feel isolated and depressed because I wasn't sad. I felt like I'd never heard before. It was like an opera singer hitting that high note and shattering the glass. I felt grief, horror, and that changed me forever.

"The more I did it, the stronger the invisible shield became. I dealt with the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl, bashed over the head with a rock. I stood over her body for 10 hours, water off a duck's back – because that's what officers do," he recalled.

"The job that did it was a 17-year-old lad that had been killed in a car accident. I went to the mortuary with his parents and there wasn't a mark on his body. When we walked in, the mother screamed, a scream like I'd never heard before. It was like an opera singer hitting that high note and shattering the glass. I felt grief, horror, and that changed me forever.

"I didn't understand how I could be depressed because I wasn't sad. I felt like the service I'd always wanted to be in had abandoned me. Individuals didn't, but the police service did."

After six months off sick, he was put on half pay.

"I found out on the way to the hospital for my son to be born - and in the nappy aisle of Tesco I fell out of love with the police. I felt rubbish and weak – I didn't even know which nappies I could afford for my newborn son," he told the meeting.

He remembers a brief mental health session where he was given a stress ball, but said much more needs to be done, and equal measure should be given to both mental health support and protective equipment.

Mr Simpson encouraged police leaders to spend more money on protecting the wellbeing of their officers.

He explained: "Investment is needed in policing because you can't have single crewing, not just for safety but for being able to talk to colleagues properly. The number one priority for chiefs should be the mental health and wellbeing of officers and staff.

"To think you want to kill yourself is the worst feeling. You're not thinking rationally, a horrible low point to be. Too many cops end up as a statistic. It's too many. We're not talking about it. You need to make sure it's on the agenda."

He highlighted an alarming statistic - in 2013, 29 police officers committed suicide – and suggested that if 29 officers were killed on duty in one year, more would be done.

‘We need to support each other’

Police officers need to look after themselves and not be afraid to speak up about mental health, around 100 delegates were told at a break-out session during the second day of conference.

The session was led by Graham Richens from the learning and development team at the national Federation HQ.

A former Met officer, Graham suffered mental illness himself and explained how many factors contributed to his ill-health, including seeing 'too many' colleagues injured and even killed in the line of duty.

During the session, delegates were invited to share their experiences of mental health.

"Around 80 per cent of officers have suffered mental ill-health," Graham explained, "One in four experience it every year.

"We see things that the public are ordinarily protected from. We experience extremes. But police officers feel isolated and alone. We need to protect ourselves – we need to talk about it and be able to identify both in ourselves and our colleagues when things aren't right."

The wide-ranging levels of trauma support were explained along with the need for Federation support for undertakes a course on mental health first aid.

Graham added: "We need to be there for each other, listen to each other, talk to each other, accept responses unconditionally, give care and support and be compassionate. We need to understand stressors and signs of mental illness, help and support each other and give and receive care to each other."

Officers' mental health was a recurrent theme in conference with several speakers linking a rise in reports of officers suffering mental health problems to the cuts to police budgets and falling officer numbers.
More support needed for officers with mental health issues

There is robust evidence police officers’ mental health and welfare is being put at risk by high workloads and falling numbers - and it would be ‘nothing short of negligence’ if chief constables fail to act on it, conference was told.

Che Donald, the Federation’s national lead on mental health and welfare, warned: “The real threat facing policing now and in the future is the lack of care, compassion and welfare provision for our members.”

He said a nine-point plan for police forces to help tackle identified issues in these areas is soon to go out to consultation. It has been created using the 16,000 responses to the Federation’s welfare survey.

Che hopes a final version of the plan will be adopted with the same support as the seven-point action plan on assaults.

He received reassurance from Chief Constable Sara Thornton, chair of the NPCC, that chief constables would be fully involved in the consultation and in improving mental health and welfare for police officers.

They were both speaking in the first debate of the conference - PFEW Welfare Survey - What Does It Mean To You? - alongside Sir Thomas Winsor, chief inspector at Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, and Matthew Scott, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Association for Police and Crime Commissioners’ lead for performance and deputy lead for mental health.

Since 2016, he said, further analysis of the Federation’s welfare survey responses had revealed robust evidence that demand, capacity and officer wellbeing are linked.

In the survey, 66 per cent of respondents said their workloads are too high (greater than in the Armed Forces); the majority said they did not have the time to do any proactive policing nor did they have the time to do the job to a standard of which they could be proud. Only nine per cent felt they had enough officers to meet all the demands made on their team.

A third of respondents said their jobs are ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ stressful; police officers psychological wellbeing is poorer than that of the general public with 80 per cent saying they had experienced feelings of anxiety, stress or other mental health wellbeing difficulties - and in 92 per cent of these cases work was cited as a factor.

One police officer was quoted as saying: “I just feel despair at the amount of change, the volume of change, a general lack of morale in the workplace. It makes coming into work at the moment a pretty miserable experience.”

Che said the survey results revealed: “Increased demand and decreased capacity is taking its toll on our members, it is affecting their mental health and it is impacting on the service we provide to the public we swore to keep safe.”

There is, he said, a duty of care to officers but pointed to insufficient appropriate support for those who need it most; 40 per cent of police officers were unaware of support services offered by their force to support mental health and wellbeing.

Many officers (45 per cent) felt they are not encouraged to talk about mental health and welfare issues. One third of respondents who had previously sought help with mental health difficulties said they did not disclose this to their line manager.

Officers were repeatedly being placed in the ‘fiery kiln on the front-line’ and were ‘bending over backwards’ to meet demands.

There is still, Che says, a stigma around mental health and for many police officers it is a dilemma whether or not to disclose.

He also pointed out the Welfare Support Programme set up by PFEW to support officers had peaked recently with 600 officers being supported.

He added: “This is a programme which was set up to assist officers to work in conjunction with their force’s occupational health or welfare programmes. Yet what we are finding more and more is forces have cut these invaluable services or farmed them out to third party employee assistance programmes.”

Support services, he said, have not always proved adequate. He described the case of one officer who had bravely asked for help after dealing with a number of horrific and traumatic incidents in a short space of time. She accessed one of the third party services expecting to see a trauma counsellor and found herself talking to a marriage guidance counsellor.

Chief Constable Sara Thornton takes part in the debate with Che Donald (left) and Sir Thomas Winsor.
He also highlighted a need to focus on the availability and quality of training to help support officers experiencing mental health difficulties. Only 21 per cent of line managers said they had had specific training.

Sara Thornton acknowledged a demand/capacity imbalance, pointing out that those crimes that are rising in numbers - such as sexual and violent crime - are often the most complex and complicated.

She added: "Honour-based violence, child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, all again take more skill, more knowledge and more time. So, I think, it is probably uncontested that there is more work, fewer people and the work has got more complicated."

Crime she said only accounts for around 20 per cent of police time so there is also the time demands of all the other work to consider.

She also acknowledged the nature of police work means officers put themselves in harm's way and that the work can be harrowing, draining and demanding.

Figures published last year show sickness for psychological reasons is up a third in the past five years and the figures for long-term sickness published last summer up by 11.5 per cent in a year.

Last November, the Policing 2015 Vision, prioritising wellbeing, was agreed and all forces have signed a Public Health Charter which prioritises workplace wellbeing.

She added: "I think we are beginning to address that stigma around mental health issues. In particular in policing I think we have a 'be strong culture' - that it is weak to show frailty, it is weak to explain and share your concerns and we need to tackle that. It is not weak, it is the way for us to be a healthy organisation."

Sir Thomas Winsor described the welfare of police officers as a 'matter of first importance' to officers, to staff, to the leaders of forces and to the public who rely heavily on the police to keep them safe, maintain order and arrest offenders.

He spoke of the 'harrowing' things that police officers must face in their daily lives and said it was little wonder they could have 'profound and life-long effects' which officers take home.

'We must ask do forces properly assess and deal with the effects of these things on their officers, on their own mental health and welfare? Let us also acknowledge to understand the knock-on effects on officers' families and those close to them ... When officers lie awake, unable to dispel what it is they have seen and they may withdraw into depression and worse. Then their families suffer too as they try to support and cope with the effects on their own loved ones."

He added: "Do forces have adequate systems for assessing these things and providing the necessary support? I think the survey we have just heard about gives a lot of answers."

Not only does it matter in compassionate terms for the individual but, he said: "If a police force's primary assets - its people - are under undue strain whether in terms of workload or the nature of the work they do and the effects of that work on them, then the force's ability to serve the public is itself compromised and that places not only the officers concerned and their families at even greater risk, it also places the welfare of others in the force at risk because an officer is impaired and therefore it places the public at risk."

He said policing can and should be made more efficient but warned the ability for more effective policing with the resources in question is jeopardised and impaired if the officers themselves are impaired physically or mentally or both.

He praised the 'can do, will do' attitude of the police but said it was not an excuse for failures higher up in planning, demand management, resource deployment, equipment provision and personal support for individual officers.

Mandatory annual Force Management Statements are being introduced by HMIC this year and will include a statement by chief constables to identify projected demand of their force, the state of the workforce and kit and the financial resources for the next four years. Those statements will, he said, include a focus on the mental health and welfare of officers as well as their physical condition and a statement on how they are supported.

Matthew Scott praised the PF EW for all the work it is doing around the topic of mental health and said campaigns such as #truepicture mean more and more people are understanding what life on the front-line is really like for police officers.

However, he said, there are demands on police time which should not be there and which are contributing to stresses - the time taken to deal, for instance, with individuals suffering from mental health illness when other agencies such as the NHS are not available.

### An honest debate

It's time for an 'honest debate with the public about some of the things we cherish but which are no longer affordable,' Sara Thornton said in response to a question from Andy Symonds from Norfolk on workloads.

Andy said that for those who went sick as they were unable to cope returned to work from sickness to find themselves facing the same high workloads which had contributed to their sickness in the first place.

In her response, the chief constable said while there were still things that could be done to reduce workloads and improve efficiencies - better collaboration on specialist resources, joint procurement and new technologies - money plays a part in what any force can deliver.

Che Donald responded saying problems arise from trying to split finite resources. He said the only way around was to either reduce the amount of crime we investigate or find additional funding to allow greater recruitment.

Another questioner asked whether Sir Thomas Winsor's view of the police force had changed since he had become chief inspector at HMIC.

Sir Thomas replied his 'admiration for the police has increased exponentially because of the arduous work that is done' but insisted that in his review he had been guided by expert advice.

However, he too called for an honest debate with the public.

'The police cannot meet all demand - we do not even know what all demand is but you have to have the best assessment of what that demand is, crime and non-crime which is a huge proportion of the demand on the police, latent and patent demand. Until those things are assessed, the condition of the assets are properly understood, you cannot have the honest debate with the public because you know what, I think that if you have a proper assessment of the demand, the assets to meet that demand and the money you have got you are going to find it does not add up.'

From the floor, Richard Eccles from North Wales asked why there was not more first aid training for officers to help them recognise and support colleagues experiencing mental health difficulties and to assist them in the short-term. He said it seemed something that would be 'really, really simple' to set up, but that appeared to be lacking.

Matthew Scott said mental health first aid training was recognised as part of the solution. The Donald referred him to a scheme in South Wales being rolled out giving training to Fed reps and said the nine-point plan going out to consultation included specific reference to training that was bottom up as well as top down.

Sir Thomas confirmed the new Force Management Statements would identify the need for training so officers can recognise the signs in their own colleagues.

In a straw poll on the conference App asking: "Is your force doing enough to provide access to the necessary assistance for officers and staff who need help for mental health?" 86 per cent said 'No.'
Reps offer support

A number of South Wales Police Federation attended mental health first aid training earlier this year.

The training was organised by rep Tony McConnon and was delivered by Remploy over two days in April and two days in June.

The trained reps are available to any member wanting to discuss their own mental health concerns or raise concerns about a colleague. They are:

**Tony McConnon** – 0781 401 7979
**Zac Mader** – 0785 846 4530
**Steve Trehanne** – 0776 540 4686
**Darran Fenton** – 0750 108 1915
**Andrew Griffiths** – 0791 337 4223
**Louise Davies** – 0750 560 2646
**Adrian Hughes** – 0779 201 2027
**Julian Stevens** – 0778 088 0003
**Mikey George** – 0788 655 8326
**Gareth Bishop** – 0782 460 1933

Help at hand

All GP surgeries will offer six sessions with a counsellor.

**Samaritans** (Freephone 24/7, 365 days year): 116 123
**Cruse Bereavement Helpline**: 0800 808 1677
**Winston’s Wish** (for children who have been bereaved): 08088 020 021
**New Pathways** (rape/sexual abuse counselling and support, also generic counselling for children and young people, ages 3 to 25, for any issue) 01685 379310

**Young Minds** (parents’ helpline for supporting young people’s mental health and wellbeing): 0808 802 5544
**Step Change** (debt advice service): 0800 138 1111
**Dan247** (Wales drug and alcohol helpline): 0808 808 2234
**CALM** (helpline for men, suicidal/mental health etc, open 365 days year from 5pm - midnight): 0800 585 8585
**Hafal** (www.hafal.org) all round modern mental health recovery programme (support in many local areas): 01792 816 600/832 400
**Gofal** (www.gofal.org.uk) mental health charity: 01656 647722
**CALL** (Freephone Community Advice Listening Line Wales) gives help/support and local signposting: 0800 132 737

**MIND Infoline** (information on huge range of topics and where to source local help): 0300 123 3393
**www.MIND.org.uk** (Website with lots of self-help advice on things like depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, PTSD, trauma, sleep problems, bereavement, etc – look under “Information & Support” and “Tips for Everyday Living”).

**CRISIS TEAMS USEFUL NUMBERS:**

**Swansea Crisis Team**
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board
From 9am to 9pm, 01792 517030
From 9pm to 9am, Cefn Coed Hospital, 01792 561155

**Neath Port Talbot Crisis Team**
Neath Port Talbot Hospital
From 9am to 5pm, 01639 683212
From 5pm to 9pm, 01639 683212
From 9pm to 9am, Ward F on 01639 862517

**Princess of Wales Hospital Crisis Team**
From 9am to 9pm, 01656 752666
From 9pm to 9am, Ward 14 on 01656 752267

**Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Crisis Teams**
Shift co-ordinators – 02920 747747 (ask to be put through to the shift co-ordinator for psychiatry)
South Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team – 02921 824 930
North Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team – 02921 824 950
CAMHS (under 18s) - 02920 536 730
Cwm Taf University Health Board
Royal Glamorgan Hospital – 01443 443443, ask for the crisis team
Prince Charles Hospital – 01685 721 721, and ask for the crisis team.

Modern slavery: ‘the greatest human rights issue of our time’

Modern slavery is the ‘greatest human rights issue of our time’, the UK’s Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner told conference during a Tuesday afternoon break-out session.

Kevin Hyland, a former head of the Met’s anti-trafficking unit, also admitted that it was a sad reflection on the today’s world that his post - established under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 - was even needed, given that slavery was abolished 180 years ago.

He said this ‘hidden crime’ affects 45.8 million people today, equivalent to the population of Spain, compared to around 11 million people before it was abolished.

Many of the victims of modern slavery can be found working in factories, fields, in the fishing industry, and car wash outlets. They were, the commissioner explained, often housed in squalid conditions.

“There has been a huge growth in the problem. Our approach has changed significantly for the better. It has been a steep learning process but the expertise to deal with vulnerable victims and serious organised crime already exists within policing,” Mr Hyland told delegates.

He said there had been 3,805 allegations of modern slavery recorded by the national referral mechanism but only 117 prosecutions and just 31 convictions. The attitude in the past had been to pass on the problem rather than tackle it and he had been shocked to find incidents catalogued on spreadsheets and not being tackled.

The commissioner went on to call for improved training for officers through the College of Policing to enable police to detect slavery and recognise the victims, rather than charging them for being complicit in cannabis farms, prostitution or other criminal activity. He also said there needed to be greater commitment by forces to record allegations and investigate incidents, backed with the necessary financial investment.
The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has come under a withering attack for making firearms officers involved in a serious incident ‘feel like suspects rather than witnesses’.

Che Donald, the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) lead on firearms, was hugely critical of the IPCC, who he accused of showing a ‘lack of trust’ in firearms officers.

Later in the Firearms Officers – Witnesses or Suspects session, Sarah Green, the deputy chair of the IPCC, gave her response and outlined the processes they had to go through.

Che said that incidents where firearms have been discharged are very low in the UK. From April 2015 to March 2016, there were 14,753 firearms operations but they were only discharged on seven occasions.

As a result, he praised officers in England and Wales who volunteer to carry firearms for being the best trained and most restrained in the world.

But he said those officers face a testing time if they discharge their weapon with the current Post-Incident Procedures (PIP) that are in place which say that officers should be separated from their colleagues.

“Once a firearms officer discharges a weapon on behalf of the state and in order to protect themselves or the public, they are meant to be treated as professional witnesses. However, if you speak to many firearms officers about this point, they will tell you a different story,” he explained.

An overwhelming majority will say the way they are currently dealt with makes them feel more like a suspect. There is only one reason for this, the IPCC. Many officers believe that IPCC investigations start to establish blame not fact.”

He claimed that the issue of separation was the main cause of concern in PIPs. He said there were grave concerns about the IPCC’s insistence that officers should be separated at the post-incident suite to avoid ‘collusion’.

“They stress that separation is not segregation but there is a perception of a lack of trust by the IPCC. It infers that officers will collude. I believe the issue of separation is flawed and unnecessary.

“The IPCC are there to ensure that the incident is investigated. The problem I have is that we are currently in a position where the police force is struggling with trust, faith and confidence in the IPCC and this is not a healthy place to be.”

Ms Green said that out of 25 investigations into firearms incidents since 2010, there had only been three cases where officers were served with notices of investigation.

The IPCC had only used its powers of arrest once and she added that a member of the public involved in a death would not be given 24 hours to compose themselves before questioning, so there was a case for equal treatment towards officers.

“We believe that having clear procedures will protect officers and ensure consistency in approach,” she said.

Former Met firearms officer Tony Long also told conference about his 25 years as a specialist firearms officer and trainer covering incidents in which he had fired a weapon. Investigators looking at the incidents later had the benefit of hindsight, freeze-framed videos and took months, and sometimes years, to review those decisions officers made in a split second when facing a life-threatening situation.

Investigators, Tony said, need to know there is a difference between human recall and the product of a video and explained that video footage and separating officers would not produce best evidence.

He outlined how an investigation launched after he shot Azelle Rodney in 2005 had hung over him ‘like a cloud’, cost him work and therefore caused financial hardship until finally he was cleared.

He called on the IPCC to show the same duty of care, empathy and sympathy to firearms officers involved in shootings as they showed to victims’ families saying their own families were equally victims in these incidents.

**Former Met firearms officer Tony Long.**
The chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) found herself under scrutiny when she faced frustrated officers during a Tuesday afternoon conference session called Moving From Discipline To Performance.

Dame Anne Owers outlined plans for structural changes at the police watchdog in her address but was on the receiving end of most of the questions from delegates afterwards with officers raising concerns about the length of inquiries.

The session began with Phill Matthews, the Federation’s lead in this area, stating that police conduct should move away from blame and punishment and towards learning and development and that the system needed to be fairer, quicker and more effective.

The re-writing of police discipline regulations through the Police and Crime Bill provided an opportunity for this to happen.

Phill said: “We want to encourage forces, the IPCC and PCCs that a more proportionate way of dealing with complaints is to look at everything through the spectrum of performance from the very start.”

Currently the system seemed to encourage investigations to start at gross misconduct/criminal proceedings and work backwards towards performance. Lengthy investigations, measured in years rather than months, were in no-one’s interest, he pointed out.

Reluctance to use the Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) was also causing issues with discipline reps across the country dealing with conduct cases where UPP could have been used instead.

He explained: “There are very few officers who start their day deliberately intending to breach the standards of professional behaviour that is not why any of us come to work.”

And he recognised the need for an independent organisation to look at complaints about the police service but it needed to be proportionate and pragmatic and not adversarial, concentrating on the aim of improving future service to the public. It also needed to command the trust and confidence of the police service itself.

There needed to be speedy assessments of cases in the first instance with only those where there appeared to be a reckless, deliberate or conscious decision to breach the standards of professional behaviour progressing to misconduct or gross misconduct proceedings.

Phill Matthews, professional standards lead at the Superintendents’ Association and a Police Federation advisor, echoed Phill’s views, explaining that the 2008 conduct regulations, were brought in on the back of the Taylor report which aimed to move away from blame and sanction to development and improvement.

He said a scale needed to be considered whereby at one end were the vast majority of officers who did a very good job and at the other were the very few corrupt and dishonest officers, in the middle would be a small section made up of human frailty where ill-health could perhaps play out in the behaviour of an individual.

“Yes there will be times when cops fall short but that does not make it bad and naughty behaviour; it is not all about misconduct,” he told the conference.

Where officers did not get it right, he explained, forces needed to be brave enough to say sorry, explain what went wrong and learn from that experience so it could get better.

“What I really hope is that the police service grasps this second opportunity to re-think how it approaches these things,” he said, adding: “It didn’t land when we first brought this in. We’ve got to achieve it this time around.”

The next speaker in this session was Chief Constable Craig Guildford, NPCC lead for conduct and performance, who began by saying that the vast majority of officers did get it right and that the organisation was good at identifying bad apples.

Dame Anne then told delegates that investigations – they were now carrying out around 600 a year - were often hampered by a lack of co-operation from witnesses but also acknowledged blame and accountability needed to be separated.

The IPCC reform would lead to a new director general heading the organisation with a team of regional directors allowing for a single point of contact for forces.

The watchdog chair said moving forward she would like to see joint investigations that took into account not just what was going on in policing but what was going on in health care too because too often there was focus on the incident the police were involved in rather than how did it get that way.

She said everyone involved in the current process needed to improve their game and the culture, which she argued had led to the failure for the previous conduct reforms to stick, and explained: “We all have to work together to get a system which does work in the way that it should, and be able to properly deal with people who have done things that police officers shouldn’t be doing or those whose incompetence is too great for the job they are doing.”
Fed at the ready

If you have ever wondered what your Fed is up to both on the front-line and behind the scenes - it is a lot!

From North Wales workplace rep Mark Jones to the Federation’s head of research and policy support, Dr Joan Donnelly, there were tales of change, progress and support helping members now and in the future in an Annual Public Value Report in the final session of conference.

Dr Donnelly described some of the issues still being fought over pay and conditions, such as building the case for change for the one per cent cap on uplift.

There have, she said, been some successes with the Police Remuneration Review Body and the Police Advisory Board but battles continue on matters such as limited duties.

In the last three years, she said the operating environment has changed: “Evidence is becoming much more important, data is becoming necessary and for that reason we have been building research capability behind the scenes as well.”

She added: “Modern policy making requires credible facts and figures and not just rhetoric.”

For instance, the Federation’s Pay and Morale Survey is now the largest workforce survey in the UK and the data it produces is valuable for pay review bodies, for publicity and for other issues.

“It’s helping to get the message out that morale is low and that significant numbers of officer are leaving... It is getting the message out that we are not crying wolf but presenting credible data.”

Catherine Feast, the Federation’s communications manager, described the importance of media relations, internal and external communications, digital and campaign work.

And she said: “If you think there are things we should be talking about and we are not talking about, please get in touch and we will help you locally and potentially nationally.”

Barry Fletcher who sits on the Change Board described improvements made on transparency, professionalism and governance in line with the recommendations of the independent review.

He said: “To be the best police service in the world we must have the best in staff association in the world.”

North Wales Police Federation’s Mark Jones said the work of the workplace rep should not be underestimated, and described his extensive caseload - a caseload replicated by hundreds of Fed reps around the country.

He says: “It’s now been recognised by chief officers that the Federation is a pivotal part, an integral part in Force decision-making. That has not happened overnight, but is the result of continuous and persistent efforts by our team.”

Bedfordshire Federation secretary and treasurer Emma Carter revealed her ‘rollercoaster of learning’ since taking on the role. She talked of her ‘culture shock’ when, on appointment, she suddenly found her views being sought around the strategic top table from senior staff who would never otherwise have listened to her.

She concluded: “As a rep, and more specifically as a secretary, I have been shouted at, ignored, hugged, bled on and cried on - tears of sadness and of joy. I know we do not always get things right and sometimes it will not always go the way the officers hope that it will... but I am hopeful we are on the right path. We need to do this together.”

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