

federation focus

SUMMER 2020

Policing the pandemic: team work



South Wales Police Federation
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Contact us:

For general divisional enquiries, please first contact your divisional Federation representative as the staff at the office are unable to deal with divisional issues. You can contact the Federation office as follows:

Write to:

Federation Office
Pencoed Police House, Heol y Groes,
Pencoed, Bridgend CF35 5PE

Telephone:
01656 869900

Or you can email us as follows:
office@swpf.org

For other matters, please contact:
Steve Treharne, chair
STreharne@swpf.polfed.org
Internal 21-763

Clare Biddlecombe, secretary and equality lead
CBiddlecombe@swpf.polfed.org
Internal 21-760

Danny Ahearn, case adviser
DAhearn@swpf.polfed.org
Internal 21-764
(Discipline/Upp)

Darran Fenton, health and safety lead
DFenton@swpf.polfed.org

Kay Bennett, general manager
KBennett@swpf.polfed.org
Internal 21-762
(Flint House/Group Insurance Scheme)

More information about the Federation, regulations and latest news items can be found at www.swpf.org

Our cover photo shows PC4411 Theresa Sullivan with PD Amber. Photo by PC 4716 Darren Thomas (RPU East). Thank you to all those who responded to our request for an image for our front cover. We were inundated with some great shots and will feature these in future editions.

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Challenging times

By **Steve Treharne**
Chair of South Wales Police Federation



The last few months have certainly brought us challenges we have not encountered before and, as ever, the police service has responded with officers remaining on the front-line throughout the pandemic, steadfast in their commitment to serving their communities.

Officers have adapted to the 'new normal', taking things in their stride but it has put them under pressure and I would urge any officer who feels their wellbeing has been affected to get in touch with their Federation representative or the full-time officials since there are various specialist organisations that can offer support. No one should suffer in silence.

Equally, if you are encountering difficulties in the workplace – related to the pandemic or more generally, please let us know. The Federation is here to help.

For the Federation itself, just like other businesses, organisations and individuals, 2020 has seen all its key events cancelled. The annual conference was replaced with a virtual conference (see Page 5), National Police Memorial Day, due to take place in Lincoln in September, will also be replaced with an online event and one of the most important dates in the policing year – the national Police Bravery Awards – was also postponed.

I feel for our nominees – PC Thomas Scourfield and Sergeant Geraint Jenkins – since a nomination for these prestigious awards is generally a once in a life-time event.

Our two brave officers were nominated after attempting to save the life of a 92-year-old man trapped in a

burning building and, as well as attending a gala dinner in a top London hotel, would have attended a Downing Street reception with their guest of choice.

It is hugely disappointing for them but plans are underway to honour them, and the other 2020 bravery award nominees, next year at a re-arranged event while the 2021 nominees will also be invited to their own celebratory event.

The bravery awards give us the opportunity to recognise the outstanding acts officers carry out while serving their communities; the many occasions where they put their lives on the line to try to protect the public.

But, day in, day out, police officers are facing risks while carrying out their duties and one of the things that has really shocked me during this pandemic has been the weaponising of COVID-19 by people who, claiming to have the virus, have spat at or coughed over police officers. This is just despicable. Assaults on officers have also increased in recent months. In South Wales, for example, our latest statistics reveal that in the first six months of this year (1 January to 30 June) we have recorded 357 assaults on officers – just short of 60 per month.

Moves are being made to increase the sentences available to the courts for these type of offences but we also need judges and magistrates to use the sentencing powers available to them.

I am keen to finish on a positive so would just like to mention the pay award (see Page 3 for more details). Given the pandemic, the 2.5 per cent increase in pay officers will receive in September is welcome, and much deserved.

And, finally, I am pleased to see that the recruitment drive, due to the Government's plans to boost office numbers nationally by 20,000 in the next three years, is starting to get new recruits into the Force. We have a way to go, but at least the journey has started.

Stay safe.

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Pay award is 'step in the right direction'

South Wales Police Federation chair Steve Treharne has cautiously welcomed the 2.5 per cent pay award for police officers as a 'step in the right direction'.

The pay award, which applies across the ranks from 1 September 2020, was announced on 21 July and follows years of below-inflation rises that have seen officers' pay fall by 18 per cent in real terms over the last 10 years.

Home Secretary Priti Patel accepted in full the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) which

has not always been the case.

Steve said: "While the announcement is welcomed, being our first above inflation award for many years, we must remember we've had a decade of pay freezes and miserly below inflationary awards.

"The many years of austerity have cut police pay by a significant amount in real terms and we must not forget that.

"The 2.5 per cent is certainly a step in the right direction, particularly when you consider the economic impact of the pandemic and it is also good to see the Government accepting in full the

recommendations of the PRRB."

John Apter, the national chair of the Police Federation, added: "With the economic vulnerability we face as a country, many colleagues will be relieved to receive a 2.5 per cent pay increase - anything lower would have been completely unacceptable."

The wage rise will mean a constable will receive an extra £1,100 – taking into account salary and allowances - of pensionable pay a year.

The Government also announced:

- **London Weighting and the dog handlers' allowance would increase by 2.5 per cent too**
- **The lowest point on the sergeants' pay scale would be removed**
- **The maximum rate of London Allowance would increase by £1,000 to £5,338 a year for officers appointed on or after 1 September 1994 and not receiving replacement allowance.**

In February, the Police Federation and the Police Superintendents' Association made a joint submission to the PRRB and called for a five per cent pay rise across the ranks.

“ WHILE THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS WELCOMED, BEING OUR FIRST ABOVE INFLATION AWARD FOR MANY YEARS, WE MUST REMEMBER WE'VE HAD A DECADE OF PAY FREEZES AND MISERLY BELOW INFLATIONARY AWARDS. THE MANY YEARS OF AUSTERITY HAVE CUT POLICE PAY BY A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT IN REAL TERMS AND WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT.



Jail sentences could be doubled for assaults on police

Doubling the maximum sentences for those convicted of assaulting police officers and other emergency service workers will only be effective if the courts use the sentencing powers available to them, says the chair of South Wales Police Federation.

Steve Treharne's comments come as the Government launched a four-week consultation that could increase the maximum jail sentence for assaulting emergency workers to two years.

"One of the things that has particularly shocked me during the pandemic has been the increase in attacks on police officers, particularly given that crime overall has fallen," says Steve. "We have heard of so many instances where people have spat at or coughed over police officers while claiming to have coronavirus," says Steve.

"Any assault on a police officer or our emergency service colleagues is unacceptable but these attacks have particularly sickened me. As a Federation, we have repeatedly raised our concerns



about the number of assaults on our members and our Protect the Protectors campaign led to the Assaults on Emergency Services Workers (Offences) Act being introduced in November 2018. This set out a one-year maximum jail sentence for these offences.

"However, this does not seem to have acted as either a suitable punishment or a deterrent to others so these proposals for a two-year maximum sentence are now being put forward but, once again, we will need to see the courts handing down consistent sentences and using the powers available to them or these increased sentences will have no impact at all."

The four-week review into the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 was launched on Monday 13 July by justice secretary and Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland and Home Secretary Priti Patel.

John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation, has also welcomed the consultation and has reiterated his calls for more consistency in sentencing.

He said: "Assaulting a police officer is completely unacceptable and there must be a suitable deterrent. I accept there will always be times where an offender does not receive a custodial sentence. However, this must be the exception and not the norm."

Officer attacks increase

Shocking new figures have shown that assaults on emergency service workers have increased by almost a quarter, despite an overall drop in crime.

Police recorded crime across England and Wales fell by 18 per cent in the four weeks until 7 June this year when compared with the same period last year, according to provisional figures released by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

However, assaults on emergency service workers have increased by 24 per cent.

Commenting on the newly released statistics, South Wales Police Federation chair Steve Treharne said the overall drop in crime rates was clearly encouraging.

"However, a 24 per cent rise in attacks on our officers is exactly the opposite," added Steve. "I find it hard to believe that in a time of national crisis like this, some people think it is acceptable to behave in

this manner.

"They are attacking the very people who have been putting their lives – and that of their families – on the line by protecting the public and the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Some of those assaults have been in the form of coughing or spitting, with some assailants claiming to have coronavirus, which is simply disgusting and there will no doubt be more numbers added to the figures when the full scale of the unrest during recent protests around the country, come to the fore.

"It's totally unacceptable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice."

John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, has also hit out at those carrying out these assaults.

"I do not accept any excuses for this rise - any violence shown towards police officers

or any emergency workers must be taken seriously by the criminal justice system and should send the message that this is completely unacceptable," he explained.

The provisional figures published by the NPCC do show that crime may be starting to increase again.

The 18 per cent fall recorded most recently compares to a 28 per cent fall for the four weeks to 12 April and the 25 per cent fall for the four weeks to 10 May. This is put down to the effect of lockdown restrictions easing and more people being allowed out of their homes, creating more opportunities for criminals.

NPCC chair Martin Hewitt said: "The vast majority of the public have followed the rules in place to limit the spread of the virus and, as a result, we have seen sustained reductions in crime over the course of the lockdown period. It is no surprise that as more people are able to move around freely, we will begin to see movement towards previous levels, however this is a gradual change. We are reassured to still be observing significant falls in crime overall."

“ I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IN A TIME OF NATIONAL CRISIS LIKE THIS, SOME PEOPLE THINK IT IS ACCEPTABLE TO BEHAVE IN THIS MANNER.

Subs to go up by £2: first increase since 2011



National Federation chair John Apter.

Delegates at a Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) virtual conference have voted through a monthly subscription charge rise of £2 a month.

The increase in fees is the first since 2011 and members will pay the new charges from September onwards.

While the new monthly cost of being a member amounts to £23.58 a month for a wide range of support, advice and services that are provided by the Federation, individuals will actually only pay £18.86 when tax relief is applied.

In a joint statement issued by national Federation chair John Apter and secretary Alex Duncan after a vote by Federation representatives from across England and Wales, they said: "Increasing subscription rates for our members was not a decision we have come to lightly. In an ideal world we would have been able to continue as we had but, after almost 10 years of subscriptions being frozen, we reached the point that doing nothing was not an option.

"For a number of years, PFEW has bridged the gap between income and expenditure by using reserves. This is not sustainable in the longer term as costs continue to rise due to inflation.

"This decision allows the Federation to continue to do the very best it can for our members and to represent them to the best of our ability."

They added: "PFEW's National Board recommended the increase after considering it was in the best interests of the members, and the organisation. Having avoided any increase in subscriptions for a decade when colleagues suffered years of austerity and pay freezes, this increase was essential to allow current levels of support and assistance for members to be

maintained."

Delegates voted in favour of three motions, all with effect from 1 September 2020:

- **The monthly voluntary subscription rate to PFEW to be £23.58**
- **Student officers who elect to subscribe to PFEW will be entitled to a 50 per cent discounted rate for the first year of their service, thereafter they will pay the normal subscription rate**
- **Those who join the service on the Direct Entry Inspectors' Scheme will pay the full subscription rate.**

The virtual conference was held on 17 June after the annual national Police Federation conference, which would have been held in Manchester on 17 and 18 June, was cancelled due to coronavirus. Last year's conference was also cancelled, as a result of a cyber-attack on PFEW.

The online conference began with the national chair welcoming delegates to the Microsoft Teams event before national treasurer Simon Kempton outlined why it was felt necessary to increase subscriptions and how it was decided to seek a £2 a month rise. Delegates' pre-submitted questions were also answered before a series of votes.

“ THIS DECISION ALLOWS THE FEDERATION TO CONTINUE TO DO THE VERY BEST IT CAN FOR OUR MEMBERS AND TO REPRESENT THEM TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY.

Allowing Specials to join the Federation is right, says chair

South Wales branch chair Steve Treharne says allowing Special Constables to join the Federation is the right thing to do.

And Steve said he was 'delighted' Specials will be able to call on the support of the Federation, particularly given their 'outstanding' work during the coronavirus crisis.

He said: "Our Special Constables have played a crucial role in our response to the pandemic. They give their free time to work alongside our members and have done an outstanding job. They've been on the front-line, facing the same dangers as our members and have done so with distinction.

"Allowing them to join the Federation is the right thing to do. They should be able to join the Federation and have the same level of protection and support that their regular colleagues have."

Under current legislation, Special Constables in England and Wales are not allowed to be Federation members but the Home Office is set to change that with the introduction of the Police Powers and Protection Bill, which is expected to come before MPs

later this year.

In a blog, the Federation's national professional development lead, Dave Bamber, said the change was not before time.

"I'm delighted that, following discussions with the Home Secretary and other Government officials to facilitate a change in law, Specials will be included as part of the Federation's remit in the Police Powers and Protections Bill, expected this autumn," he said.

"This inclusion will allow Specials to receive the same representation as full-time police officers and allows the vital work they do to be officially recognised. I am delighted we will be able to give Special Constables the protection in the workplace that they so richly deserve."

Dave added: "Time and again during the COVID-19 pandemic I have been impressed and humbled by the way in which Special Constables have stepped up and worked alongside their full-time colleagues to serve the public when they needed it the most."

Roads policing 'inadequate' say HMIC inspectors



An inspection by Government inspectors has found that roads policing in some forces was inadequate and that capability and capacity often did not meet demand.

South Wales was one of seven forces inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) but officers and staff at only two – West Midlands Police and the Met – demonstrated a strong commitment to roads policing and the positive effect this had on road safety.

Cuts to roads policing budgets leading to a drop in the number of dedicated roads policing officers were blamed for a gradual increase in road deaths after more than 30 years of steadily declining fatalities.

The "Roads Policing: not optional" report from HMICFRS highlights the fact that £120 million cuts to roads policing budgets between 2013 and 2019 were reflected in a

'substantial decrease' in police enforcement activity in particular the targeting of the Fatal Four of drink and drug driving, not wearing seatbelts, excess speed and driving while distracted, for example, by using mobile phones.

It found a lack of co-ordination hindered effective engagement with partners and the public. It also called for roads policing to be standardised and accredited, as one of 13 recommendations to improve the effectiveness of roads policing in England and Wales, and also urged the Government to include roads policing within the Strategic Policing Requirement.

Steve Treharne, chair of South Wales Police Federation, said the report should serve as a wake-up call to the Government, chief officers and Police and Crime Commissioners.

"It is time that there was a proper investment in roads policing," says Steve,

"The chronic under-funding we have seen in recent years has to be reversed. Roads policing should be a key priority for all forces; people's lives are dependent on it."

And Tim Rogers, the response driving lead for the Police Federation nationally, was equally concerned.

"Sadly, this report does not come as any great surprise to me at all," Tim explains, "The inspectors' views echo what we have been saying for some time. Roads policing has been allowed to slip down the list of priorities. It has been under-funded meaning that it has become under-resourced and people have been paying for that with their lives."

"I am not sure what it is going to take for the Government, chief officers and Police and Crime Commissioners to realise what a critical role roads policing officers play in helping ensure that people can use our roads safely. Between 2015 and 2018, an average

of just over 1,600 people lost their lives each year on our roads network and many more were seriously injured. That should be impactful enough in itself to make police leaders decide to take action.

"This report is putting the blame for these figures squarely down to cuts to funding and an apparent decline in the priority given to roads policing. So will this be sufficient to prompt a reinvestment in roads policing? I really hope so. We need chief officers and Police and Crime Commissioners to act on the recommendations in this report to halt the steady increase in deaths on our roads and also tackle the criminal elements making use of our roads network."

Besides South Wales, West Midlands and the Met, the other forces inspected by HMICFRS were Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Humberside and Staffordshire. Only 19 of the 43 forces in England and Wales listed roads policing or road safety as a priority in their police and crime plans.

“ IT IS TIME THAT THERE WAS A PROPER INVESTMENT IN ROADS POLICING. THE CHRONIC UNDER-FUNDING WE HAVE SEEN IN RECENT YEARS HAS TO BE REVERSED. ROADS POLICING SHOULD BE A KEY PRIORITY FOR ALL FORCES; PEOPLE'S LIVES ARE DEPENDENT ON IT.

But overall, in terms of capacity and capability, the report said that, while forces had reduced their spending on all police functions by about 6.1 per cent between 2013 and 2019, the roads policing spend had reduced by 34 per cent in real terms, or £120 million in that time. This resulted in a reduction in capacity due to falling numbers of specialist roads policing officers and the broadening responsibilities of the remaining officers.

In one force, one officer provided the total roads policing response for a whole county, inspectors discovered, and another, with a port through which 6,000 HGVs travelled daily, had no focussed enforcement

activity, despite the fact these vehicles are involved in 28 per cent of collisions involving serious injury or death.

The report highlighted a 25 per cent reduction in breath tests between 2015 and 2018 and also the continuing issue of drivers using mobile phones at the wheel. The number of people who are killed in road accidents not wearing a seat belt has increased; in 2013 just under 20 per cent of car occupants killed in crashes were not wearing a seat belt and this increased to 26 per cent in 2018. In the same period, the number of fixed penalty notices for not wearing seat belts reduced by 75 per cent from 86,300 to 21,600.

Inspectors pointed to the self-serving deployment of speed cameras to raise revenue as another issue.

The difficulty in recruiting collision investigators was also acknowledged in the report with the extra training and continuous professional development plus intense scrutiny in court all being factors.

The inspection aimed to examine how effectively the road network is policed and sought to establish:

- **If national and local roads policing strategies are effective**
- **If capability and capacity match demand**
- **Whether the police engage effectively with the public and partners, and**
- **How well police officers are trained to deal with roads policing matters.**

The report concluded: "There is a clear, and pressing, need for government, Police and Crime Commissioners, chief officers, and the College of Policing to recognise the importance of roads policing in reducing death on the roads."

And it stated: "In addition to the tragic loss of lives, the financial cost of all road traffic collisions (including those that go unreported) is estimated to be around £36 billion per year. In one year alone, the estimated cost of motorway closures was £1 billion. But some forces are failing to recognise their part in making the road network safe and efficient; and how best to work with partner agencies that have a shared responsibility for road safety.

"We identified some good initiatives, but too often the effect of these was unclear due to a lack of analysis and evaluation. And when it was identified, good practice wasn't shared across forces in an effective manner. Similarly, the support provided to national road safety campaigns wasn't consistent, which adversely affected their effectiveness. Too often we found officers that hadn't been given the appropriate training and support to allow them to carry out a critical role."

Read the full report and recommendations at <https://tinyurl.com/y7ssen84>

Support campaign

Officers who have been involved in incidents in which they have been injured – or risked injury – due to a driver making off after a police stop are being urged to help build a body of evidence that could help secure a change in the law to give colleagues better protection in the future.

The Federation is working with the Home Office to amend the new Police Powers and Protections Bill to allow for a new requirement for officers to order motorists to get out of their vehicles when asked to do so after a police stop.

It comes after a series of incidents in which officers have been seriously injured by drivers who when stopped refuse to get out of their vehicle and then drive at them when making off.

Officers who have been involved in incidents where they have been injured – or risked injury – after stopping a vehicle should email Tim Rogers, the Federation's national response driving lead, at tim.rogers@polfed.org

Have your say

Federation members are being asked to contribute to a review of roads policing. The review comes after a 10-year period in which the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads has plateaued after years of steadily declining.

It is being conducted by the Department for Transport (Dft), working with the Home Office and the National Police Chiefs' Council, and will explore:

- **How intelligence could be better used to target dangerous behaviours**
- **How technology can assist in enforcing road traffic law now and in the future and,**
- **How to better understand the value of enforcement in influencing road user behaviour and the current enforcement capability.**

The Roads Policing Review Call for Evidence has now been published with the Federation urging members to use this opportunity to share their views and experiences.

Find out more at <https://tinyurl.com/yddoa5fw>

Mark develops role in ensuring the Welsh voice is heard



Mark Bleasdale, second from right, with (left to right) Gerald Jones, Labour MP for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, Ruth Jones, Labour MP for Newport West, Ben Lake, Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion, and Christina Rees, Labour MP for Neath.

From the coronavirus crisis to mental health and influencing new legislation, the Welsh affairs lead for the Police Federation of England and Wales has a wide-ranging remit.

Mark Bleasdale only began in the role in November but has already had some considerable successes.

Now he wants to build on those to establish the Federation as the country's professional voice on policing in the eyes of the Welsh Assembly.

"Whenever the Federation responds to anything with the Government, my role is to check this doesn't have a different effect in Wales or may not apply in Wales," said Mark, who leads the Federation's Welsh Affairs Sub Committee (WASC).

"The advantage to the role is sometimes it's easier to get legislation through in Wales than it is in England. One example is the

Assaults on Emergency Workers legislation. The Welsh Government was ready to go with fast-track legislation that could potentially have embarrassed the Home Office and it would, in effect, have had to copy it.

"There's no doubt this pressure was in part responsible for the legislation going through as quickly as it did. So now I'm monitoring what the Welsh Parliament is looking at around mental health legislation. There may be parallels when the Federation wants to feed back to Government regarding police powers relating to the Mental Health Act and any new mental health legislation.

"I'll also be liaising with the Welsh Parliament as the Police Covenant develops. It will have a different process of implementation as health is devolved to the Welsh Parliament."

One of his first tasks on becoming only the second holder of the Welsh affairs lead

post, succeeding Steve Trigg of South Wales, was to represent members when the report of the Commission on Justice in Wales was published at the end of October last year. Effectively a public inquiry, the commission involved eminent lawyers and academics who, alongside the former South Wales Chief Constable Peter Vaughan, considered a wide range of justice issues. Police Federation officials gave oral evidence to the commission.

For policing, the commission recommended: "With legislative devolution, the governance arrangements for the police should be re-examined."

Mark explains: "In effect, this recommendation and the commentary in the report say that if justice and law-making were completely devolved to Wales then consideration should be given to devolving policing to Wales.

“So, in essence, it still seems to be some time away that this would get discussed meaningfully and many things would need to happen politically first. Having said that, the WASC has taken the policy position that policing could be devolved to Wales, but the question of whether it should be devolved is one for politicians, not the Federation.”

Following publication of the report and subsequent media interest, an engagement event was held in the Welsh Assembly in Cardiff with members of the WASC getting the chance to speak to elected Assembly Members.

Since then, he has been working his way around the Senedd speaking to politicians and examining their views on issues affecting police officers in Wales - including mental health, the ambulance service and arrival times and the use of Naloxone by police officers.

Mark admits that when first taking on the role he had to spend some time relationship-building just because people did not know him were simply unaware of the role. But the coronavirus epidemic forced the way in which both governments have had to operate and this has included the relationship with unions and staff associations.

This led to a significant success for Mark. He explained: “In the early days I was putting pressure on Welsh Government officials on the issue of testing. It resulted in the health minister in Wales agreeing that police officers and staff were front-line workers and needed to be included in the testing regime.

“This was a fortnight before it was agreed in England, which means officers in Wales who were isolating were able to go into the testing process to provide them with some reassurance that they were either fit to go back into work or their families knew whether COVID-19 was affecting them.”

Mark is a former chair of the Dyfed Powys Federation branch and the first officer from Dyfed Powys Police to be elected to the National Board. He says the role of the Federation in supporting members has evolved considerably during his five-year tenure.

“The Federation has to continually expand its remit to support members and that the perception we are only there for you if you were in ‘trouble’ has changed,” Mark adds.

But now, he sees a wider understanding of the fact that the Federation supports members on a wide range of issues. This has also changed the way the Federation is



Mark Bleasdale is pictured with Jessica Morden, Labour MP for Newport East.

perceived by the Force.

“Things have certainly moved on now and members are seeing the developments in other important areas such as health and safety in the workplace, equality, wellbeing, injury on duty, pensions,” said Mark.

“Conduct is still often the most serious and stressful thing an officer is likely to see in their service, but now there’s a much wider range of issues that Federation reps have to be skilled at to effectively represent members.

“When I started, I found being a full-time rep was challenging as I had to lead the branch and deal with detailed issues representing individual officers.

“This was not fair to the individuals or to the branch. We were fortunate to be able to get the Branch Council to agree to a business case to recruit a part-time rep in the office. We appointed someone with significant experience in dealing with pension issues, equality and wellbeing in the Force.

“This has meant a better service for members and this benefits the Force with the sickness rate significantly reduced as officers off work regularly have contact from the Federation. This seems to get officers back to work earlier.

“I was then able to look at the broader issues for the branch and engage with

leaders and chief officers. This, in turn, will allow future chairs to lead the organisation and the service to members is better.

“I think this has changed the relationship that the Force leadership has had with the Federation for the better for our members. They now consider the Federation part of the solution and actively engage in consultation rather than being part of the problem.”

Mark has been a Federation member since he joined the Force in 1990.

“I first became a rep some years ago when my Force was going through a reorganisation and I felt the voice of chief inspectors in that programme was not being heard,” he said. “Being on the Federation gave the chief inspectors a voice in the process.

“Having the broad range of experience in the Force, I felt I was well suited to representing officers of all ranks and a wide range of issues.”

Mark’s first job was as a trainee solicitor, but he wanted a career dealing with people.

“I applied to join the police when I saw a friend from university on the cover of a police recruitment magazine,” he said. “On joining I could see I would never leave as it gives you so many diverse opportunities to show and develop skills, and I really feel that I have had 15 or so jobs within a career.”

And it is that experience across a range of posts that Mark believes equips him for his current Welsh Affairs lead role.

“I think I have a broad experience through ranks and front-line services in the police service to know how to influence policy-makers and police leaders on the issues that matter to members,” he said.

“ THE WASC HAS TAKEN THE POLICY POSITION THAT POLICING COULD BE DEVOLVED TO WALES, BUT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT SHOULD BE DEVOLVED IS ONE FOR THE POLITICIANS, NOT THE FEDERATION.

Knife crime up by 20 per cent

Knife crime in South Wales rose by 20 per cent in the last year, according to new Government figures.

There were 885 offences involving a knife or sharp weapon in South Wales in the 12 months to March.

The figure was up from 735 offences in the previous 12 months, data from the Office for National Statistics shows.

South Wales Police Federation chair Steve Treharne said: "Incidents involving knives can have tragic consequences for all involved. Under Operation Sceptre, South Wales Police have put in place several measures to address the concerns of our communities, and clamp down on those who are carrying and using knives. Operation Sceptre is our approach to tackling knife crime and the associated issues of serious violence and illegal drugs

"Our hard-working officers speak to thousands of youngsters every year in an effort to raise awareness of the dangers of knives and sharp objects. We need to get the message across loud and clear that picking up a knife is always the wrong choice and

that it can have devastating, and lasting, consequences for all.

"Our officers are determined to disrupt those who use weapons and ensure those individuals that carry knives for an unlawful purpose face the full force of the criminal justice system. We cannot tackle this scourge alone and we require the support of our communities and partner agencies to work with us as this has to be a shared responsibility so that we can ensure that our communities become a safer place to live."

Nationally, the number of offences involving a knife or sharp weapon rose by six per cent to 46,265, its highest level on record.

Robbery also increased for the fifth year in a row, by six per cent (to 83,241 offences) compared with the previous year.

National Federation chair John Apter said: "It's a tragedy knife crime continues to spiral as my colleagues are stretched to their limits, and with fewer officers on patrol it comes as no surprise.

"More than ever we need a visible deterrent to violent crime. We need more officers available to deter and prevent these kinds of crimes and ease the burden on colleagues."

He added: "Yet again we see the effects of austerity that have necessitated this current Government's investment in funding and the 20,000-officer uplift announced last year – investment that will still only bring us back to pre-2010 levels."

There was a rise of 10 per cent in homicides to 683, which includes the 39 people found dead inside a lorry in Essex last



October. Excluding the lorry deaths, homicides increased by three per cent.

However, many crimes have fallen including a four per cent decrease in recorded offences involving firearms and a four per cent fall in theft.

Burglary offences recorded by the police have also continued on a long-term decline, decreasing by nine per cent.

John added: "The fact some statistics have fallen despite this is a testament to the hard work and dedication of officers who police with professionalism across the country."

**There were
885 offences involving
a knife or sharp weapon
in South Wales in the
12 months to
March.**

Pensions consultation

The Government has announced a consultation on its proposed remedy to the discrimination found when it launched the 2015 Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) Police Pension Scheme.

The consultation, which also involves other public service pension schemes, was launched on Thursday 16 July and will close on 11 October 2020.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is working with other UK staff associations to form a detailed response to the Government consultation.

"We are fully aware and acutely conscious of the financial importance of a fair remedy for all our members," says a PFEW statement, "Our position has always been, and remains, that officers should be permitted to remain on the pension scheme they joined, if this is to their benefit."

We will keep you informed as more information becomes available.

You can read the consultation document at <https://tinyurl.com/yajk2up6>



Officer fatigue

The first national police wellbeing survey has revealed that almost half of the 35,000 officers who responded were getting less than six hours sleep a night.

The survey was carried out by Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service, and the College of Policing.

Those high levels of fatigue will now be addressed as the two bodies begin research, along with experts from around the world, practitioners and UK staff associations, to come up with solutions to improve officers' wellbeing.

"Policing is challenging and can be very demanding. On a daily basis, officers are making instantaneous and often instinctive decisions that can have a critical impact on their own safety and that of their colleagues and the public they serve. But their decision-making processes can be affected if they are sleep-deprived or suffering from fatigue," says Steve Treharne, South Wales Police Federation chair.

"The results of this survey confirm what we, as a Federation, have raised concerns about in the past. Officers are stressed, they are struggling to sleep and their wellbeing is

suffering. Working shifts will take its toll. A Force's number one priority should be its officer and staff team so I hope that this survey leads to more being done to support them and enhance their wellbeing."

The wellbeing survey also found that police officers working in safeguarding and investigations reported lower levels of wellbeing, while police staff reported lower levels of wellbeing in areas such as custody, contact management and incident management.

There were, however, many positive findings from the survey too:

- **65 per cent of respondents reporting feeling satisfaction in their work.**
- **The majority of officers and staff reported they felt trusted in their roles and were able to act and make choices which reflected their own personal beliefs and values.**
- **Both police officers and staff reported feeling high levels of competence in their work, meaning they felt they could be effective, make important contributions and felt valued by their co-workers and supervisors.**

Chief Constable Andy Rhodes, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) wellbeing lead and service director for Oscar Kilo, said: "Looking at the results, we see some areas of progress, and other issues which strengthen our resolve to keep doing more.

"It's clear that many people feel valued by their peers and supervisors - but less so by the organisation and the public - a gap we see in every survey that is directly linked to trust. Fatigue also leaps off the page, and this has a lot to do with our cultural acceptance in relation to things like disrupted sleep and all the risks it can bring to our health and operational decision-making."

Chief Constable Mike Cunningham, CEO of the College of Policing, said the survey would provide a baseline which Oscar Kilo would use to measure progress and help prioritise work nationally and within individual forces.

Find out more on the Oscar Kilo website at oscardkilo.org.uk

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Deputy leader of the Senedd praises police officers

Officers have acted proportionately and in the finest traditions of the police service during the coronavirus pandemic, says the deputy presiding officer of the Welsh Parliament.

Ann Jones, the Member of the Senedd (MS) for the Vale of Clwyd, also praised officers for putting the public's needs above their own while serving and protecting their communities.

The former national official with the Fire Brigades Union worked in fire control rooms for nearly 30 years and said she understood the pressures officers and their families were under.

"Enforcing non-essential travel rules has been a vital part of police officers' duties for the small number of people who feel able to disregard the safety of others," Ms Jones explained.

"All such encounters carry increased risk and officers have not shied away from putting the needs of others at the forefront of their actions. It would be extraordinary if such a rapid and drastic change to policing saw no teething problems.

"Despite the attempts of some of the media to portray the police in a negative light, I believe that officers have acted proportionately and in the finest traditions of the service. Because of this, the police retain the overwhelming support of the public.

"Unlike England, the lockdown continues here in Wales with the Welsh Government recently increasing the limit on fixed penalty fines to help officers better enforce the Welsh regulations.

"As a former emergency service employee, I know the impact of these challenging times will not just be felt by police officers and support staff but also their families. Many officers will be separated from family who may be self-isolating.

"My gratitude, and that of the public at large, is extended to police officers and staff who continue to keep us safe during these unprecedented times."

The MS acknowledged that the pandemic had brought a 'seismic shift' in the way people live and work and said

officers had very quickly responded to an unprecedented situation that meant they had to explain the reasons for the lockdown, encourage people to follow the guidelines and, where necessary, enforce strict limitations on movement and freedom of assembly in an effort to protect public health.

Steve Treharne, chair of South Wales Police Federation, said the support of the MS would be appreciated by officers.

"All too often police officers seem to find themselves on the receiving end of criticism from politicians so it is pleasing to hear a Welsh Assembly member giving them the praise they deserve for rising to the challenge of policing during the pandemic," says Steve.

"We welcome Ann Jones' comments and thank her for taking the time to put on record her appreciation for the difficulties officers have faced and her acknowledgement that they have put their own health and safety on the line to ensure that they help protect the public they serve."

Dates set for postponed exams

South Wales Police Federation chair Steve Treharne has welcomed the news that sergeants' and inspectors' exams postponed due to the coronavirus crisis are now going ahead online later this year.

The College of Policing has confirmed the National Police Promotion Framework (NPPF) Inspectors' and Sergeants' Exams will take place in the autumn.

"Officers who had prepared for these exams earlier this year were no doubt hugely disappointed when the college was forced to cancel them due to the pandemic," says Steve, "But, the college has now come up with a workable solution and candidates will be given the opportunity to sit the exams online."

Dates for the Inspectors' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam are Monday 12 and Wednesday 14 October.

Dates for the Sergeants' NPPF Step Two Legal Exam are Monday 9 and Wednesday 11 November.

Mike Cunningham, chief executive at the College of Policing, said: "We will be working at pace in the coming months to put all necessary steps in place to move to online delivery for exams. Candidates will need to reserve all of these dates in the event we're able to hold the exams on one day. We will advise of this as soon as we're



able to.

"In identifying a date for the rescheduled sergeants' exam, we've considered the notice we need to provide to candidates for revision. We've also tried to identify a date that's least likely to impact on planned leave or those with caring responsibilities."

He said that the new system could mean that candidates receive their exam results earlier than usual.

"We will aim to have the results of the sergeants' exam issued by the end of November," he explained.

The NIE scheduled for 2020 will be held, as planned, on 8 September and 24 November.

The Direct Entry Superintendents' Examination will also be held, as planned, on 17 November.

Read the FAQs at <https://tinyurl.com/yd57mpfp> to find out more.



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Treatment of police pensions upon divorce

By **Ben Evans**, senior associate in family law at **Slater and Gordon**



The report of the Pension Advisory Group (PAG), 'A Guide to the Treatment of Pensions on Divorce' was published in July 2019.

Three recent decisions by the Family Court concerning the divisions of pensions have all referenced the PAG report as being influential on judicial decision-making.

The judgment of HHJ Robinson in *KM v CV* [2020] EWFC B22 and *RH v SV* [2020] EWFC B23 along with HHJ Hess' judgment in *W v H* (divorce: financial remedies) [2020] EWFC B10 can be drawn together to provide the following authority regarding the treatment of pensions:

- Expert evidence from a Pensions on Divorce Expert or PODE where proportionate and affordable is invaluable and often essential to provide evidence on the pension claim on divorce to achieve equality of income.
- The court is to determine the claim to a Pension Sharing Order taking into account the income - yield of pensions, as well as their capital value (CE), particularly in small to medium money cases, where needs are an issue. It will often be fair in such cases to aim to provide the parties with similar incomes in retirement by way of a Pension Sharing Order, rather than a simple division of CEs.
- When needs take precedence, the court will give less weight to contribution based

arguments and excluding any portion of a pension as 'non-matrimonial' is unlikely to be justified where pensions are the sole or main asset to meet the parties' post-retirement needs.

Pensions cannot be compared as like for like value with other capital assets. Mixing categories of assets by way of offsetting, risks unfairness and often the appropriate method is to divide the pension separately from other assets.

How does this effect the claim on a police pension upon divorce?

The police pension is an unfunded final salary occupational pension scheme and the income from within the scheme per £ of CE is generally higher than annuity income outside the scheme per £ of CE. As such, subject to the CE being valuable, in a case where retirement is on the horizon and the case being one in which needs arise, the guidance from the PAG report is that the fair outcome would be for the Pension Sharing Order to be based on an equalisation of incomes on retirement and this approach requires expert evidence from a PODE.

This is different to adopting the approach of simply dividing the pensions by equality of capital value (CEs). Therefore, in the majority of cases, before the claim to a Pension Sharing Order can be determined, it's now more likely than ever that there will need to be a joint instruction to an expert pension actuary (at joint expense) to prepare a pension report and to calculate the Pension Sharing Order to equalise incomes.

Further, it's certainly not clear cut, nor guaranteed, that the portion of the police

pension accrued prior to co-habitation/marriage will be automatically ring-fenced from the pot for division. Where the pensions concerned represent the sole or main mechanism for meeting the post-retirement needs of both parties and where the income produced by the pension funds after division falls short in meeting needs, the court's approach is likely to be that no portion of the pension should be excluded and that all the pension provision, regardless as to when it accrued, should be taken into account in determining the Pension Sharing Order.

This is not to say that practitioners should stop asking the PODE to calculate percentages for Pension Sharing Orders on the basis of both the entirety of the pension provision as well as only that pension that has accrued during the relationship but, unless the latter calculation meets the needs of the receiving spouse, the likelihood is that the judge will order a Pension Sharing Order that is higher - thereby dipping into the pre-marital/post-separation pension contributions.

While there's no 'one size fits all' to the answer as to how pensions should be treated upon divorce and every case is decided on its own facts, at the discretion of the judge, the comments on pensions in recent case law referencing the PAG report should be treated as authoritative and persuasive.

When going through a divorce, it's imperative that you seek advice from a divorce specialist experienced in dealing with police pensions.

If you would like specialist advice from a family lawyer please contact Slater and Gordon on **0808 175 7710** and we'll be happy to help.

Federation seeks feedback on women's uniforms

Women officers are being urged to let the Federation know their thoughts on what they think of their public order and firearms uniforms.

The national Federation is assessing the suitability of both these uniforms for women and wants to hear their views – both positive and negative.

"I am keen to hear the thoughts from

women officers who currently wear the kit but also those who have tried public order and firearms but encountered issues with the uniform and have therefore not continued with the role," says National Board member Belinda Goodwin who is involved with this project, along with National Board colleague Gemma Fox.

"In particular, I'd like to know what

people think of the fit. Have they been issued with male sizes, unisex or uniform specifically for women? It appears there is a lot of variance across the country. But to bring about change we must look at the evidence base. The more responses we can get the better."

Please email your comments to Belinda Goodwin at **bgoodwin@polfed.org**

Are your beneficiaries up to date?

If your circumstances have changed since you first joined the Group Insurance Scheme (GIS) please can you update the Federation as soon as possible?

You can find the beneficiary update form on the South Wales

Police Federation Facebook group page or from the GIS section of the Federation website at **swpf.org**.

All policy documents are also on the website.

Please e-mail the completed form to **office@swpf.org**



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