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West Midlands Police Federation August/September 2022



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WELCOME

Welcome to the August/September 2022 edition of **Federation** - the magazine for members of West Midlands Police Federation.

We are always on the look-out for good news stories so please get in touch if you have something to share with colleagues. It does not have to relate to your policing role - though we are definitely interested in hearing about what's going on around the Force. Do you have an interesting hobby or perhaps you are involved in sport locally, as a player, a manager, a coach?

Just get in touch and let us know.

We would also be interested to hear what you would like to see featured in your magazine.

Cover photos: A selection of images taken during the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Thanks to the Force for the use of some of their images.

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Poor pay and pension changes will result in us losing valuable officers



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

The topic on all our minds surrounds our pay and pensions which have been decimated in the last 12 years or so, and it's been emphasised again with the real terms pay cut announcement by the Government.

News that police officers will get a flat rate pay award of £1,900 across all ranks and spinal points this September is disappointing but unfortunately, it's hardly surprising.

The flat rate pay award is in some ways the fairest way of increasing pay, particularly during an unprecedented cost of living crisis. It's very

simple, everyone from student officer to chief officer gets £1,900. In contrast to the standard, percentage award method we have become used to, flat cash awards disproportionately benefit lower paid officers, as opposed to the former which disproportionately benefit the higher paid.

In this sense, pay inequality within the service is lessened, to a degree. So, I think in times like this, when we are struggling to attract capable recruits we badly need, it is one positive although it clearly limits the total bill to the Government, at a time when fiscal responsibility is seen as important in battling inflationary pressures in the economy.

But what we all know is that our pay has gone down in real terms, not just this year, but in nearly every year we can remember. The real value of our pay and pensions has been totally and systematically undermined for years.

While fiscal restraint maybe the watchword for the Treasury right now, this constitutes the biggest real pay cut in my service of 22 years. And this adds insult to injury when we think about the changes to our pensions which mean we'll have to work longer for less.

This pay award, on top of the numerous which preceded it, is utterly tone deaf and ignorant of the long-term decline of policing as an attractive profession. Most of us genuinely joined for reasons other than money, but we all expected our wages would allow us to live a comfortable lifestyle in line with the risks and sacrifices we make – which was apparent during the Commonwealth Games.

I am desperately concerned about the recent uptick in experienced, skilled officers leaving because they've simply had enough. Anyone who has been in the Force for 15 years or more will have seen that the value of their pay really is now badly lagging their contemporaries, and when you have a family to support and aspirations to do better in life, leaving the job becomes the logical choice for many. The tragedy is it's the public and vulnerable members of society who will suffer. The pressure on those left in the Force is already increasing as a result.

I understand the anger and irritation of my colleagues. I feel it myself. But, as Federation chair, I'm not another union boss who can simply ask members to down their tools and

“ WHAT WE ALL KNOW IS THAT OUR PAY HAS GONE DOWN IN REAL TERMS, NOT JUST THIS YEAR, BUT IN NEARLY EVERY YEAR WE CAN REMEMBER. THE REAL VALUE OF OUR PAY AND PENSIONS HAS BEEN TOTALLY AND SYSTEMATICALLY UNDERMINED FOR YEARS.

stand at the picket line as we protest for a rise. We are a Federation of officers, crown servants, and there are legal constraints as to what we can do to fight for our interests.

Many colleagues have called for another ballot of members on industrial rights, something for which there has never been a stronger moral case. But the reality is this Government, nor any of the main political parties, is remotely likely to agree to this. Nor are there any legal avenues following a recent ECHR case emanating from Spain.

We could hold a ballot, gain a massive "Yes" vote and we would have the headlines for a couple of days. But we would need a clear plan as to what that could achieve.

“ I THANK EVERYONE WHO WORKED SO HARD TO MAKE SURE THIS YEAR'S GAMES WERE NOT ONLY A HUGE SUCCESS FOR THE REGION BUT SAFE FOR EVERYONE TAKING PART, PARTICULARLY AS SPECTATORS AND VISITORS TO THE CITY.

To be clear what I want, and what is conceivably achievable, is a return to collective bargaining – getting round the table with the Home Office and negotiating our pay, backed up by a binding Police Arbitration Tribunal (PAT). The Cameron Government disgracefully abolished the Police Negotiating Board (PNB)/PAT system in 2014, as well as making attacks on our conditions (Windsor) and introducing flawed pension changes (2015).

The PNB system, introduced by the Thatcher Government, respected the unique, incomparable status of the Office of Constable. It understood and gave credit to the fact we are unable to take industrial action and therefore decisions of the PAT were usually respected and only once set aside. This led to a period of real terms increases in our pay within which the Government, when it needed to tighten its belt for the good of the country, could do so, and we were naturally more understanding.

Instead, what we have seen is successive administrations impose real terms cuts with impunity under the auspices of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB). In reality, the Government has abused our inability to take industrial action and seemingly got away with it. Only now the chickens are coming home to roost with a plethora of reports laying bare the damage done by underinvestment across the board.

We have to be clear with the Government

and opposition. If policing is to be saved, we must start investing in our bobbies again. That means fair pay and pensions, proper training, effective infrastructure and adequate equipment, such as a Taser for every bobby who wears the uniform (any others), because the risks we now face have multiplied.

The time has come to do something radical to force change as best we can. The Scottish Police Federation has taken such action with its "Withdrawal of Goodwill". Regulations are different in England and Wales and, of course, we must be careful, but shouldn't we all be working to the rules anyway? Gone are the days when we can simply write to the Government, after all, we've been doing that for years and so far, it's made no difference.

There are strong and sincere views within the Police Federation about how to approach this and I know background work, which is not highly visible, is going on daily. I cannot fault the effort. But I have made my views and the views of our members plain internally.

I'd like to also mention the Commonwealth Games. The writing of this column comes two days after the closing ceremony at the Games, which were held in Birmingham and lasted 12 days.

I thank everyone who worked so hard to make sure this year's Games were not only a huge success for the region but safe for everyone taking part, particularly as spectators and visitors to the city.

But that success took a huge toll on my colleagues. Forced to work to the extremes of what Regulations allow – 12-hour shifts, 6 days in a row. This was no fun for them. The Home's office refusal to allow any acknowledgement of these sacrifices by paying us in full for rest days worked leaves a very bitter taste.

Of course, they may say, that would have been "outside Regs" – funny how it changes to suit the narrative and I will continue to fight such exploitation with any means I can. Many colleagues returned to their normal roles immediately and are facing a backlog of work at the expense of the Games. There can be no doubt our officers especially have paid a heavy price to ensure the event was a success, but I can assure you that has been recognised, just a pity not financially.

It was, of course, a pleasure welcoming colleagues from other forces to Birmingham via mutual aid, and this event was a fine example of how colleagues from across the nation can work together to deliver a successful, major, international event.

As your chair, I was so proud of the professionalism, dedication and commitment you continued to show throughout despite the obvious pressures.

For the city and for our region, I am extremely happy that the event went off so well.

Notts Chief set to lead Force

PREFERRED CANDIDATE IS NAMED AFTER SELECTION PROCESS

Nottinghamshire Chief Constable Craig Guildford has been approved to succeed Sir David Thompson who retires at the end of this year.

Mr Guildford's selection as the preferred candidate for the role was approved by the Police and Crime Board on 25 July.

West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers was among the first to congratulate Mr Guildford on his success.

"Mr Guildford will be joining the Force during what is a very challenging time for policing," says Tim, "As a Federation, we congratulate him on his new role and we very much look forward to working with him and to hearing his plans.

"He has a reputation as a tough but fair man and I believe he is someone who we can work with."

Mr Guildford's policing career began when he joined Cheshire Constabulary as a PC in 1994. He spent time in CID before being seconded to the National Crime Squad in Manchester.

Having worked through the ranks to become a superintendent with Cheshire, he was appointed as Assistant Chief Constable for Specialist Operations leading the change team with West Yorkshire Police in October 2012 before joining Gwent Police as Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) in April 2014.

Mr Guildford joined Nottinghamshire Police as Chief Constable in February 2017.

Sir David served as the Force's Deputy Chief Constable between 2010 and 2016 when he took over as Chief. After 12 years in the role, he announced his retirement earlier this year.



Nottinghamshire Chief Constable Craig Guildford.

Mark wins Police Bravery Award



DC Mark Bates and wife Laura outside 10 Downing Street.

An off-duty West Midlands Police officer who tackled a knife-wielding thug after he stabbed a man outside school gates has won a regional award at the 2022 Police Bravery Awards.

Detective Constable Mark Bates was accompanied by his wife Laura and the couple joined fellow nominees from across the country at a Downing Street reception hosted by Home Secretary Priti Patel who praised their "incredible courage".

He and the other winners then received their prestigious awards at a presentation ceremony at a central London hotel later that evening. Mark was joined at the awards by West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke and Chief Constable Dave Thompson.

Mark insists he was "just doing my job" when he leapt into action to disarm and detain the attacker and said he was amazed when he won the prestigious award.

He said: "This is honestly amazing. I really didn't expect anything like this. It feels absolutely amazing. To be honest with you, at the end of the day, all I did was tackle him and arrest him. It feels amazing and I'm thankful to be acknowledged.

"I know I was off duty but I just acted instinctively as any police officer would. It's my duty to protect the public at whatever cost to me and I would do the same again.

"As a police officer you are never really off duty and you should step up in these situations because the public rely on you to do that."

The shocking incident began to unfold when two men and a woman, who were drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis, started abusing parents as they waited for their children outside Water Orton School on 1 July last year.



Laura and Mark Bates celebrate his regional award.



At the evening awards ceremony are (left to right) West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke, Chief Constable David Thompson, DC Mark Bates and his wife Laura, and Police and Crime Commissioner Simon Foster.

A man approached the group to ask them to stop but he was attacked by Kyle Youlden (21) who stabbed him in the arm before running off.

DC Bates and the injured victim gave chase and caught up with Youlden with the officer disarming him and pinning him down until officers from Warwickshire Police arrived to provide back-up.

He then went in search of the other man and woman who had been causing trouble at the school gates and, after a brief chase, detained and disarmed the other male suspect who was also found to be in possession of a knife.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich said: "It was a privilege and an honour to accompany Mark to the Police Bravery Awards.

"He has played down his role in this incident but the fact is his brave actions could well have prevented loss of life or serious injury to members of the public.

"He didn't think twice about intervening and tackling a man armed with a knife and in doing so showed great courage and determination.

"Officers like Mark will always say they were just doing their jobs but he is a credit to West Midlands Police. We are very proud of him and he should be very proud of himself."

Speaking at the reception in Downing Street, Ms Patel told nominees: "I am delighted to be able to celebrate with you, once again, the incredible courage of a remarkable group of police officers.

"Your work involves an extraordinary degree of sacrifice that should never be taken

for granted. These awards play an important part in ensuring your deeds are recognised.

"I would like to thank the organisers of the 2022 awards, the Police Federation, and Police Mutual for their continued support for the event."

The officers also received warm praise and thanks from Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

He said: "These acts of bravery, honoured here today by your colleagues and the public, are outstanding and in the finest traditions of policing. I salute each and every one of the fantastic nominees at the awards. You are truly the best of the very best.

"It is absolutely right and proper that we honour and celebrate the work of our brave men and women in uniform who work, day in and day out, to protect the public.

"The progress we are making towards recruiting 20,000 more officers gives me full confidence that together we will make our streets safer. From the bottom of my heart, thank you."

Police Federation national chair Steve Hartshorn said: "We have heard extraordinary stories of bravery, selflessness and acts of courage that are not just part of the job.

"The bravery shown by these nominees is truly outstanding. From putting their own lives at risk to save others, facing violent attackers and terrifying weapons, to rescuing people from perilous situations in fast flowing water or stranded hundreds of feet in the air, they have faced danger head on."

The annual bravery awards are organised by the Police Federation and sponsored by Police Mutual.

This year's overall winner was Lincolnshire Police's PC Steven Denniss who was stabbed as he tackled a double murder suspect he had spotted while off duty and out walking his dogs.

" I KNOW I WAS OFF DUTY BUT I JUST ACTED INSTINCTIVELY AS ANY POLICE OFFICER WOULD. IT'S MY DUTY TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC AT WHATEVER COST TO ME AND I WOULD DO THE SAME AGAIN.

POLICE BRAVERY AWARDS



“ WE WENT TO 10 DOWNING STREET AND WALKED UP AND DOWN THE FAMOUS STAIRCASE WITH THE PORTRAITS OF ALL THE PRIME MINISTERS. WE WENT OUT INTO THE GARDENS AND THERE WAS A REALLY GOOD ATMOSPHERE.

DC Mark Bates and his wife Laura listen as Home Secretary Priti Patel addresses the bravery nominees at the reception in Downing Street.

'Downing Street was a highlight for me'

Police Bravery Award winner Mark Bates has been reflecting on his visit to London for a Downing Street reception and the presentation ceremony.

Mark and his wife Laura spent the night in London and then headed for the Downing Street reception the following morning.

They joined fellow nominees and award-winners at No 10 where they enjoyed a short tour of the iconic Whitehall building before moving out to the famous gardens and terrace where they snacked on canapes and soft drinks.

Home Secretary Priti Patel, who hosted the reception, mingled with guests and posed for photos with nominees.

Mark said: "We went to 10 Downing Street and walked up and down the famous staircase with the portraits of all the prime ministers.

"We went out into the gardens and there was a really good atmosphere. I never actually got to talk to Priti Patel but she was there

speaking to people.

"The presentation was that evening and that was really good.

"Downing Street was the highlight for me, I really enjoyed it there."

Mark was presented with the Police Bravery Awards Region 3 award by Kerry McMahon-White, head of partnerships at Police Mutual, sponsors of the event for more than 10 years. Region 3 also includes Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police.

Mark was off-duty when he tackled a knife-wielding thug after he stabbed a man outside a school.

The Detective Constable insists he was "just doing my job" when he leapt into action to

disarm and detain the attacker and said he was amazed when he won the regional award.

He said: "This is honestly amazing. I really didn't expect anything like this.

"It feels absolutely amazing. To be honest with you, at the end of the day, all I did was tackle him and arrest him. It feels amazing and I am thankful to be acknowledged.

"I know I was off duty but I just acted instinctively as any police officer would. It's my duty to protect the public at whatever cost to me and I would do the same again.

"As a police officer you are never really off duty and you should step up in these situations because the public rely on you to do that."

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DC Mark Bates (centre) with Kerry McMahon-White from sponsors Police Mutual and national Federation chair Steve Hartshorn.



Photos courtesy of Anderson Photography.



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Police pay crisis: situation still 'woeful'

The situation with police pay remains "woeful" despite the Government's announcement of an average five per cent pay rise for officers, says West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke.

Rich, speaking after the announcement on 19 July, said he was pleased the Government had taken seriously the Federation's representations on behalf of young in service officers who have really struggled with the cost of living crisis.

"This award is stacked more in favour of them, rightly so," says Rich, "But this is an effective pay cut across all ranks and spinal points. We are losing experienced and skilled officers hand over fist due to the vast loss in the value of our pay, as well as the slashing of our pensions - which is part of our overall package.

"In the medium and longer term, we need to see successive real-term increases in police pay as well as fair pension scheme amendments this year.

"This is better than I expected but, in the context of everything we have seen over the last decade or more, the situation remains woeful. It's difficult to be positive when my members continue to experience remuneration levels well below what they deserve."

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) initially said the Government announcement that police officers would get a pay award of £1,900 from 1 September 2022 was positive news for those young in service and new joiners, but is more disappointing for those longer in service and in supervisory ranks who are also struggling financially.

National chair Steve Hartshorn said the

Government's pay award was a "small first step" in repairing relationships between ministers and hard-working police officers. The pay increase, he said, would help in bridging the gap between household incomes and the current cost of living.

"Officers have already faced two years of a blanket pay freeze, a 20 per cent real-term pay cut since 2010, and now huge additional cost of living pressures. The average five per cent settlement announced today is still below inflation, and PFEW believes the Government 'still has a long way to go' to demonstrate it is treating officers with the dignity and respect they deserve. This is only a small first step forward in regaining their trust," Steve explained.

"It is disappointing that the pay increase is not good news for all officers, negatively affecting those in higher ranks. It's in the Government's direct interest to ensure that all police officers are paid properly and can pay their bills. If they don't, retaining the high-quality officers our country needs - and this Government promised - will be doomed to fail.

"PFEW has worked, and will continue to work, for better work conditions for all our members."

Around 10 days later, the national Federation issued a stronger response to the pay award.

Pay award is insufficient, says national Fed chair

The police pay award is not enough to cover the cost of living crisis and for many officers is once again a real-terms cut, according to Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) national chair Steve Hartshorn.

Steve, in a statement said there had been mixed reactions to the pay award announced last month but added that the Federation shared the anger and frustration of officers who were again left feeling undervalued, disheartened and let down by the award and by the Government.

He said: "The award of a flat increase of £1,900 across all ranks is simply insufficient to cover the prevailing cost-of-living crisis - triggered by the 40-year high rate of inflation, which continues to rise - and the amount ultimately fails to address the real-terms pay cut that police officers have been facing for over a decade.

"The latest PFEW pay and morale survey results highlighted that 99 per cent of officers strongly agreed police deserved a pay rise in line with inflation. The reality is that 99 per cent probably won't see any benefit from this pay award at all.

"Most officers will receive far below five per cent, leaving them worse off financially than they were last year with a zero per cent

increase due to the current crisis. Even for those officers who will receive the top end of the pay award, it will still not be enough to cover the increases in household bills, fuel and groceries.

"How can we expect our police officers to be able to do their jobs effectively if they are unable to afford to look after their own basic needs?"

Steve said he was pleased the starting pay for new joiners on the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) route had increased and acknowledged this would be reassuring for new recruits.

But he said for everyone else from PC to chief inspector, the settlement had

fallen far short of what was required.

He warned that higher ranking, more experienced officers who are also dealing with the soaring inflation figures, had found the pay award wildly out of touch with the cost-of-living crisis.

"Across England and Wales, the feeling is that this award is divisive and devalues those officers longer in service," he said.

"The divide promotes a lack of incentive for promotion and while it is right that new recruits should be paid more than they currently are, this should not be to the detriment of other officers which is what the award has achieved."



Praise for officers after Games success



- A total of 48 police forces, up to 300 specials and 50 police dogs worked to ensure a safe and enjoyable Games each day.
- The sporting spectacular was held across 15 venues.
- As well as West Midlands officers, there were 2,000 mutual aid officers.
- Around 3,000 officers were on duty every day and they were also supported by the British Transport Police.

Police officers have been praised for the way in which they helped ensure the Commonwealth Games was a resounding success.

Jon Nott, West Midlands Police Federation lead, says officers, both from the Force and from other supporting forces, have worked incredibly hard to keep everyone safe but also entered into the family-friendly feel of the event which ended on the evening of 8 August

with a spectacular closing ceremony.

He also made special mention of officers who were not directly involved in policing the Games who had their shifts changed and worked long hours to maintain “business as usual” policing within the Force.

“Each and every day there have been around 3,000 officers on duty for what has been the biggest event to be staged in Birmingham,” says Jon, “They have stepped up



The mutual aid traffic officers outside Newbold Revell. A total of 103 bikes were used in the policing operation.

to the mark to keep people safe but have also stayed true to the spirit of the Games.

“I am incredibly proud of each and every officer who has been part of this policing operation; they demonstrated all that is good about policing in this country. That applies not just to those who were part of policing the Games but also those back in Force who faced the disruption of shift changes and long hours so that we could also maintain our usual policing service.

“No one should under-estimate the impact Birmingham staging the Games has had on the Force and those officers who filled the gaps left by colleagues who were called upon to police the event.”

Jon added: “In terms of those who were directly policing the Games, many have said how much they enjoyed being out and about on the streets and around the sporting venues, mixing with the public and going back to traditional community policing. Some have got

blisters on their feet as they have been doing far more walking than usual but they have all said how much they have loved just getting out and engaging with people.

"I just want to thank them all: our own officers involved in the policing operation, those called in to backfill for officers taken away from their usual roles and also the 2,000 officers drawn in from other forces across England and Wales as part of the mutual aid response. Everyone has been amazing and they have all played their part in making sure the Games were such a resounding success."

During the Games, West Midlands Police Federation's full-time officials - including branch chair Rich Cooke, deputy secretary Chris James and health and safety lead Deano Walker - and several workplace representatives have staffed the branch's welfare van, providing refreshments to officers but also answering queries from members.

Rich said: "It has been good to get out to see officers, to check how they were doing, maybe offer a coffee or a chocolate, but also to deal with the many questions they had and offer support and advice. Many were feeling tired and drained after consecutive 12-hour shifts - unsurprising as some were doing six days in a row!

"This was extreme policing and many now need a long rest. Sadly, they won't get it with other events coming hard on the heels of the games such as the Conservative Party Conference, numerous football related events in addition to continued unprecedented demand from the public. Many will also return to a backlog of work from within their own

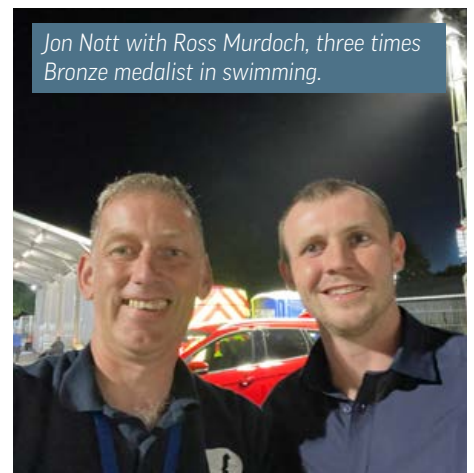


Officers visit the welfare van at West Bromwich.

areas of business that simply haven't been serviced during the Games period. Burn-out is an ever-present reality today.

"The Federation team has been on hand for members and has also helped support visiting officers from other forces. There were some isolated issues with the standard of the accommodation and food but these were dealt with or made better. There are points of learning and not everything was fantastic from our point of view.

"Most disappointing was the Home Office's refusal to allow the Force to pay our officers for their rest day working, which would have



Jon Nott with Ross Murdoch, three times Bronze medalist in swimming.

been the right thing to do, albeit outside of Police Regulations. This is in stark contrast to mutual aid officers. So that leaves a bitter taste for many having lost so much family time, with measly compensation. These things need to be fed back and reflected upon for future national events. The team and I will ensure that happens.

"But overall we got the job done. There were no major incidents and the public were very safe and happy from what I saw. Most officers played their part, or were affected in some way. That includes Specials, volunteers and not just those visible at the Games but also those working behind the scenes and those officers and staff who found themselves picking up extra work, different shifts and longer hours as they filled the gaps left as their colleagues made up part of Operation Unity, the Commonwealth Games policing initiative."

The Norfolk, Humberside, Hertfordshire, North Wales and Dyfed Powys Federation branches all brought their welfare vans to Birmingham to offer support to officers.



Officers mixed with spectators.

Keeping it in the family

For more than two years now Jon Nott has been preparing for the Commonwealth Games.

And, as the West Midlands Police Federation lead for the Games, he has pretty much lived and breathed the event over the last month – so much so that he has hardly been at home.

So, when on the last Sunday of the sporting spectacular a space opened up in terms of running the branch welfare van, which has been out and about offering support to members, Jon asked if his son Isaac (15) could help out, so he could combine some valuable family timing with his Federation duties.

Isaac, who wants to join the police as soon as he is able, jumped at the opportunity and saw first-hand not only what his Dad's work involved but also how the policing operation is undertaken.

"The Commonwealth Games has been a family-friendly event," says Jon, "So it seemed apt to see if Isaac could get involved. He had a great day and really got an insight into the work of the Federation and also the role of police officers at a large-scale event.

"As an added bonus, he met the Chief Constable who took time to have a chat and was also able to meet some of the mutual aid firearms officers.

"He is now looking forward to being able to apply to be a police officer when he can."



Isaac (left) and Jon Nott (right) with Chief Constable David Thompson.

Thanks to the Force for the use of some of its photos in this feature.



Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, with officers in Walsall.



Officers with the West Midlands Police Federation welfare van at Chase Avenue.

Making memories



Policing patrols at Edgbaston.



“I made it,” said the former Assistant Chief Constable of West Midlands Police who is living with a terminal illness, after receiving a special invite to attend the opening ceremony at this year’s Commonwealth Games.

Chris Johnson, who was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) nearly four years ago, received an invite to the event, which he would have attended as the Gold Commander for the Force, had he not been forced to retire due to his condition.

His wife Sharon, also a former West Midlands Police officer who retired early this year so she could care for Chris, attended the ceremony with him.

“When we found out Birmingham was going to host the Commonwealth Games, Chris was still at work. After he retired having been diagnosed, Chris kept in touch with Ian Reid, the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, and he was promised an invite to the opening ceremony. I remember Chris always said to me, ‘if I’m still here,’ explained 51-year-old Sharon.

“So, when the invite for the opening ceremony landed, it was so special. We had reached a huge milestone.

“We were at the ceremony, soaking up the atmosphere and Chris looked at me and said ‘I made it’. It was very emotional, as you can imagine, there were lots of tears that day.”

Chris, who was diagnosed with MND in November 2018, had worked in West Midlands Police for 29 years. He worked up until 2020, which is when his condition worsened and he was forced to retire.

“When we attended the opening ceremony, we saw lots of old colleagues, who still referred to Chris as ‘boss’, it was very touching. The poor woman escorting us, was having to stop every few minutes because we kept on bumping into people we knew,” added Sharon.

“We met this one lady, she was helping to run the hockey. She came up to Chris, she held his hand, looked at him and said that she had been working with the police for 11 days and they had all asked if she had met Chris yet. They had all told her what a legend he was.

“Chris never wanted to retire, he would have worked beyond his 30 years if he could. He loved being part of the police, so it was so nice to see people coming over and making a special effort to see him.”

As for the actual ceremony, Sharon, who was born in Birmingham and has lived in the area for her entire life, said it was “phenomenal”.

She said: “It was a real privilege and an honour to be there. I’m a true Brummie me, and I really felt proud to be a Brummie.

“The atmosphere was amazing, I can’t



Chris and Sharon Johnson are greeted by Chief Superintendent Sallie Churchill and Chief Constable David Thompson.

describe it.”

Over the past few months, Chris’ condition has dramatically deteriorated. Other than his fingers, he has lost all movement in his body from the neck down and he relies on Sharon to help him with almost everything, including eating.

“When Chris was diagnosed we both said that we would live for today and nothing would stop us. It’s really important to us that MND doesn’t take over our lives,” Sharon added.

“It took a lot of planning to get him to the ceremony but it was worth it, just to see the smile on his face. We shared so many special moments together.

“Chris was told there was a 60 per cent chance that he would be dead two years after diagnosis and now, we’re nearly four years in and we feel very lucky.”

The couple, who met in the Force and married in 2001, have two children, aged 17 and 12, together. Sharon was given extra copies of the event programmes and two toy Commonwealth Games mascots, that she can add to the memory boxes she is making on behalf of Chris, for their children.

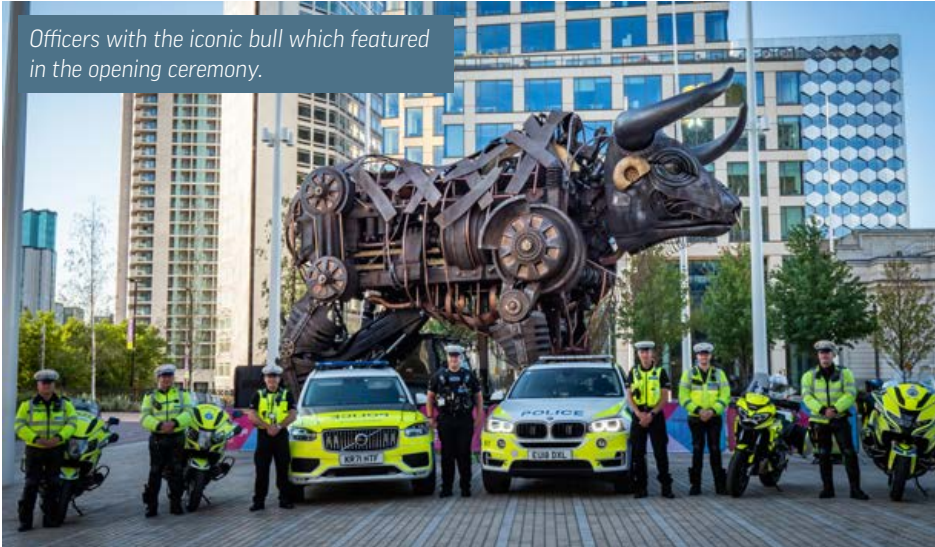
“People talk with their eyes and I could see the joy in Chris’ eyes as we watched the ceremony,” said Sharon. She added: “It was just so lovely to see.

“I could see it in his face, he was having the best time. He was so pleased he was able to be part of the Games in some way.”

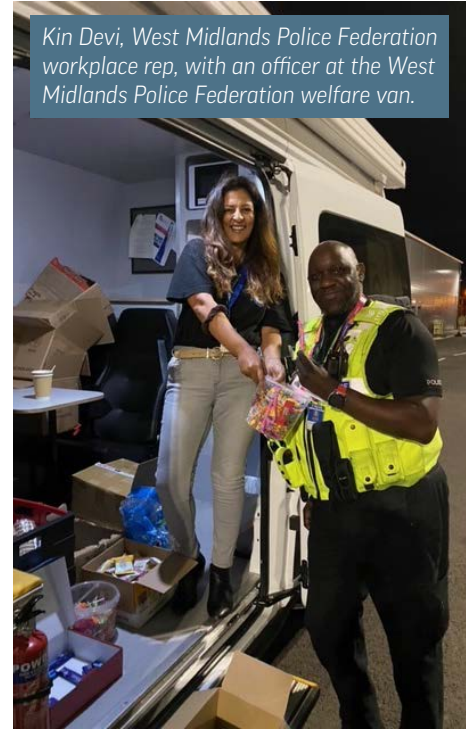
Chris and Sharon also attended the closing ceremony of the Games, which was “equally as amazing”.

“Well, Ozzy Osbourne is the ultimate Brummy isn’t he? So when he came out on stage, it was such a huge shock to everyone. It was amazing. Both ceremonies were unbelievable and it’s memories with Chris that I will be able to treasure forever.”

Officers with the iconic bull which featured in the opening ceremony.



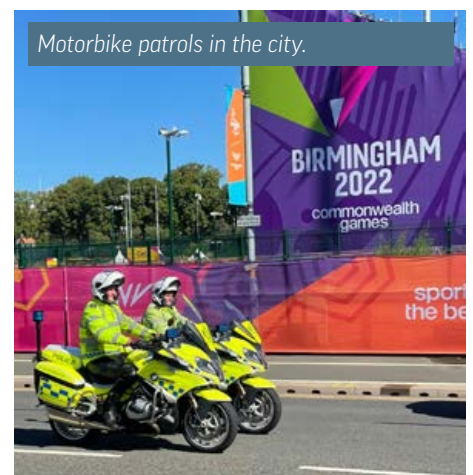
Kin Devi, West Midlands Police Federation workplace rep, with an officer at the West Midlands Police Federation welfare van.



Among the spectators at the NEC crowd zone.



Motorbike patrols in the city.



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Almost 400 new officers join Force

West Midlands Police recruited 393 new officers in the 12 months to March 2022, according to new figures from the Home Office.

The newly-released data shows the Force had 7,579 officers on 31 March this year compared with 7,186 on the same date the year before.

The 5.5 per cent increase is slightly above the national figure of 4 per cent which equates to 4,927 extra officers and brings the total number of serving officers across England and Wales to 140,228.

Home Office officials said the latest figures revealed the second highest number of recruits in a year since records began, just behind the year ending March 2020 when there were 12,883 new officers.

The recruitment drive is part of the Government's Police Uplift Programme which aims to bring in 20,000 new officers by next March.

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich

Cooke said: "We need more officers. But, what we are seeing over and over again, is that they are not fulfilling their potential. This is due to the fact that the experienced officers they need to support their development are spread more thinly than ever.

"The ratio of students to tutor constable is too high – it should be one to one but sadly it's often more like one to four in many cases. Students are being posted to high demand, high risk areas of business such as Public Protection and Force CID and expected to manage heavy complex workloads at an earlier stage than ever I have seen in my 22 years of service.

"Urgent investment is needed in pay, to retain and reward experience and skills, training and infrastructure, to make sure these officers are at the locations they are needed at the heart of communities.

"Our Force covers a large and very diverse region, so it is incredibly important that it is properly resourced with a workforce that reflects the communities it serves."

Rich said the Force should now be introducing measures to ensure as many of the new recruits as possible stick with the job.

He said: "Officer retention is as important as officer recruitment so we are urging the Force to make sure new recruits feel they are being supported throughout their training and probation, are treated with respect at all times and are fairly rewarded as their policing careers take off.

"This can be the best job in the world and I want every one of those new officers to have long, enjoyable and successful careers with West Midlands Police."

“ OFFICER RETENTION IS AS IMPORTANT AS OFFICER RECRUITMENT SO WE ARE URGING THE FORCE TO MAKE SURE NEW RECRUITS FEEL THEY ARE BEING SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THEIR TRAINING AND PROBATION, ARE TREATED WITH RESPECT AT ALL TIMES AND ARE FAIRLY REWARDED AS THEIR POLICING CAREERS TAKE OFF.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS



West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Chris James with the new van.

Welfare van up and running

FEDERATION AND FORCE IN JOINT INITIATIVE

As can be seen with the policing of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, officers will now have access to a welfare van when they attend major incidents and events or when preserving crime scenes thanks to a joint initiative between West Midlands Police Federation and the Force.

"We are delighted that the welfare van is now fully up and running," says West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Chris James, "It will provide great facilities for officers and we are looking forward to seeing members take advantage of what's on offer."

The van has been fitted out by a specialist vehicle conversion company and boasts a main area featuring a table with seating for four, a sink, a microwave oven, a fridge and a boiling water dispenser. To the rear, there is a toilet

with sink and a storage area.

It also has a retractable canopy which opens from the side to provide shelter and shade.

The van will be predominantly used at scenes where police work is expected to go on for more than 24 hours but it will also be sent to pre-planned events. It was used during the

Commonwealth Games and also the next Operation Pelkin where it will be deployed by the Federation as 'Teapot 1'.

Chris added: "This is a project I have been working on for three years so it is nice to see it finally become a reality. I proposed the procurement of a welfare van after carrying out a survey of crime scenes over a period of 12 months and found that between 18 and 24 officers attending the average scene were

“ WE ARE DELIGHTED THAT THE WELFARE VAN IS NOW FULLY UP AND RUNNING. IT WILL PROVIDE GREAT FACILITIES FOR OFFICERS AND WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING MEMBERS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHAT'S ON OFFER.



Inside the van.



Chris James with the van during the Commonwealth Games deployment.

going without basic facilities.

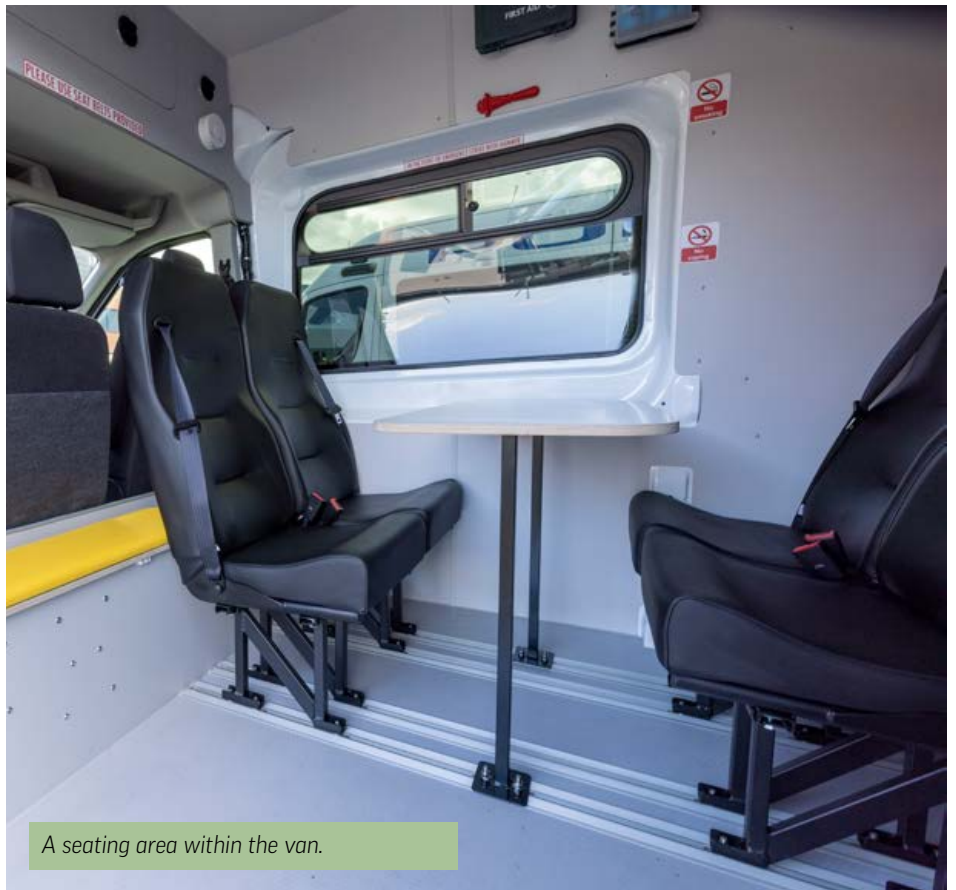
"There were too many occasions when officers found themselves with no access to a toilet, nowhere to take refreshments, and nowhere to wash their hands.

"So we are delighted the van is now up and running and we are looking forward to seeing it put to good use."

He added: "I expect there to be a real demand for it, which should help us evidence to the Force the need for more welfare vans in the future. We want members to let us know what they think of it. This is just one part of how we are focusing on officer welfare and we welcome ideas for what else we can do to support officers.

"I submitted a business case to the Force for them to purchase and convert the van. However, when this was unsuccessful I managed to obtain funding through the Federation to convert a van if the Force purchased the base vehicle.

"We have highlighted to the Force that officer and staff welfare is their responsibility. However, we are always looking for ways to support our members and hope that our significant contribution to this project will prove the concept. This will hopefully pave the way for the Force to purchase more welfare vans going forward."



A seating area within the van.

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ARMED FORCES
COVENANT

Specials urged to join the Federation

Members of the Special Constabulary are being urged to speak to workplace representatives or the Federation office team to find out more about the benefits of joining West Midlands Police Federation.

The Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioners have agreed to jointly fund, for the first year initially, the subscription fees of Specials who wish to sign up for Federation membership.

"The Federation has long campaigned for Specials to have access to Federation membership," says Tim Rogers, secretary of West Midlands Police Federation, "Specials are often working alongside regular officers but have had none of the support, advice or representation available to Federation members.

"Now, through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which became law in July, they have been given access to Federation membership and we very much welcome them.

"Specials are a vital part of the policing family, giving up their own time to help police our communities while, in many cases, also having their own jobs too."

Specials who subscribe to the Federation will be able to receive support and advice from elected workplace representatives and will also be able to call on expert advice and representation during performance and conduct proceedings and Post-Incident Procedures.

As subscribing Federation members,

Specials will also for the first time be able to apply for legal assistance in criminal, conduct and civil cases as well as gaining access to a wide range of Member Service offers including discounts on family days out and deals on buying or leasing cars.

INSURANCE SCHEME BENEFITS

On subscribing to the Federation, Specials will also be able to subscribe, for an additional fee, to West Midlands Police Federation's Group Insurance Scheme.

The Group Insurance Scheme represents value for members by providing a range of cover, including RAC motor breakdown plus critical illness insurance and all at a competitive price.

The package includes the following*:

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- Care on Demand
- Critical illness cover
- RAC motor breakdown cover
- Personal accident cover
- Sickness benefits
- Worldwide family travel insurance
- Mobile phone/gadget insurance.

*Policy limits and exclusions may apply, please see policy wording for full terms and conditions.

Legal expenses cover for Special Constables who are members of the Police Federation is paid for by West Midlands Police Federation.

Amnesty at the Police Treatment Centres

The Police Treatment Centres (PTC) offers physiotherapy and psychological wellbeing services to its subscribing members.

The Police Treatment Centres is a registered charity supported by voluntary donations from the Police Family primarily in the Northern forces of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but also from British Transport Police, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence Police. Officers currently make a donation from their pay of £1.80 per week.

The PTC has two treatment centres – one in Harrogate and the other in Auchterarder, where subscribers can receive treatment following an illness or injury, with the aim of helping them return to better health. The charity also offers a remote physiotherapy service.

Almost 4,000 people attend the treatment centres each year and most receive intensive physiotherapy. Others seek support with stress-related conditions or anxiety and depression as part of a psychological wellbeing programme.

The PTC is offering an amnesty to Specials. If a Special signs up to the PTC before 30 September 2022, they will be able to access treatment without the usual 12-month wait.

[Find out more about the PTC.](#)
[Sign up now.](#)

Police drivers: make sure you are up to date with training

A police officer who is not “in ticket” should not get behind the wheel of a police car, West Midlands Police Federation secretary Tim Rogers has said.

Tim, who is the national Federation lead for response driving and driver training, believes great progress has been made in providing better legal protections for police drivers when they are required to drive outside the “careful and competent driver” standard that applies to regular motorists, and previously applied to police drivers.

However, those protections will not apply if a police driver is not up to date with their training.

“Under the provisions of the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act, which was introduced this year, officers must have completed their refresher course under Section 19 of the Road Safety Act to ensure their training meets the standard required,” says Tim.

“This means they must have completed a one-day reassessment every five years or they lose their entitlement to drive. Other criteria - such as eyesight tests - are also in scope.

“We now have a professional accredited process that is enshrined in law. Forces, as well as officers, need to be aware of this requirement for police drivers to be ‘in ticket’.

“The Federation’s position is that officers



should be trained by an approved and licensed police driver trainer. We do not believe sub-contractors are able to keep up to date with important changes to the portfolio that allow policing to keep pace with criminal trends.”

The change to the law follows eight years of campaigning by the Police Federation of England and Wales, which was spearheaded by Tim.

While it means that officers’ driving will no longer be judged by the standard of the “careful and competent” driving member of the public, it does leave officers open to proceedings if their driver training is not up to date.

“If you’re one day out of date, you’re not covered. It’s no different to firearms, as soon as the firearms training has elapsed it will not be extended for even an hour, let alone three months or six months, so our members have got to ensure they are in ticket to drive a police car. The good news is that I think that message is getting through and is being heard,” he says.

Where previously, driving out of a ticket would be a breach of policy, it could now be considered a breach of legislation, with potentially more dire consequences. The good news, says Tim, is that West Midlands Police is keeping up with its requirement to train officers. The local Federation is also satisfied that there is sufficient support from the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), particularly its driver training lead, Deputy Chief

“ **IF YOU’RE ONE DAY OUT OF DATE, YOU’RE NOT COVERED. IT’S NO DIFFERENT TO FIREARMS, AS SOON AS THE FIREARMS TRAINING HAS ELAPSED IT WILL NOT BE EXTENDED FOR EVEN AN HOUR, LET ALONE THREE MONTHS OR SIX MONTHS, SO OUR MEMBERS HAVE GOT TO ENSURE THEY ARE IN TICKET TO DRIVE A POLICE CAR. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT I THINK THAT MESSAGE IS GETTING THROUGH AND IS BEING HEARD,**

Constable Terry Woods.

Tim has been working with DCC Woods and the NPCC to put in place a “reasonableness defence” that could be embedded in the tactical directory and Authorised Professional Practice (APP), to cover situations that are not covered by police training where officers may have to react in the moment.

He explains: “In short, policies and training cannot anticipate, regulate, train and license every eventuality. We have become efficient at making changes to training in line with demand but there will always be a policy vacuum leading to vulnerability.

“The legislation in its current format may restrict a police driver from responding legally when confronted by the many and varied situations police are likely to encounter while driving police vehicles. The provisions, without amendment, encourage officers to decline to

engage in situations that policies and training do not cover. We are having this exemption hopefully written into the APP as a remedy is required.”

The Federation has also been successful in establishing the principle that decisions of whether a police officer is driving in accordance with their training is decided by subject matter experts approved by the NPCC. Their duty would be to a tribunal or court rather than to any particular side.

Tim adds: “The standards of training are consistent for the first time ever. There is now legislation in place to protect the unique role of police officers and enable us to protect the public without the risk of prosecution that existed, but everyone has to help themselves too by ensuring they are in ticket. If not, then don’t get behind the wheel of a police car. It’s not worth it.”

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Anniversary service at UK Police Memorial



Home Secretary Priti Patel pays her respects at the memorial as Canon David Wilbrahim looks on.

Home Secretary Priti Patel joined the families of fallen officers at a special service organised to mark the first anniversary of the dedication of the new UK Police Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire.

The new memorial was dedicated in July last year by HRH The Prince of Wales.

Among the families attending this year's service, which was led by Canon David Wilbraham, the national police chaplain, was the son of Special Police Constable Ralph Corfield, also called Ralph, from Birmingham City Police (now part of West Midlands Police).

SPC Corfield was killed on 28 July 1942, exactly 80 years to the day of the anniversary event, during an enemy air raid while helping to deal with the aftermath of an earlier bomb blast.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of the murders of PCs Fiona Bone and Nicola Hughes, killed in Manchester in September 2012. Their fathers, Paul Bone and Bryn Hughes, gave a reading during the service as did Denis Gunn, the father of Richard Gunn

who was killed in Woking in 2004.

As part of the wreath-laying, a special floral tribute was laid by a representative from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) George Cross Foundation. This year marks the centenary of the establishment of the RUC. A total of 314 members of the RUC were killed in terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland, 302 of them between 1969 and 1998 representing the biggest loss of life of any UK police force.

Since the memorial was dedicated last July, more than 300,000 people have visited the 40-foot iconic tribute at the arboretum. The bronze memorial designed in the shape of an open doorway signifies a threshold that police officers pass through to the "dangerous places" but from which some never return.

Speaking at the dedication ceremony last year, HRH The Prince of Wales said: "On behalf of a grateful nation, I want to express my immense gratitude for the courage and sacrifice of those who have laid down their lives to keep us safe and protect us from harm, remember their loved ones who mourn and pay tribute to those who continue to serve to safeguard our freedoms."

Martin Hewitt, chair of the Police Arboretum Memorial Trust who addressed the service and led the reflection, said: "This memorial is a tribute to all those who have dedicated their lives to policing. Every day our officers and staff go out to police our cities, towns and villages not knowing the dangers they will face. They often put themselves in harm's way to protect us and our property, and safeguard our freedoms. Sadly, for some they pay with their lives."

Rich Cooke, chair of West Midlands Police Federation, has urged officers to visit the arboretum and the UK Police Memorial.

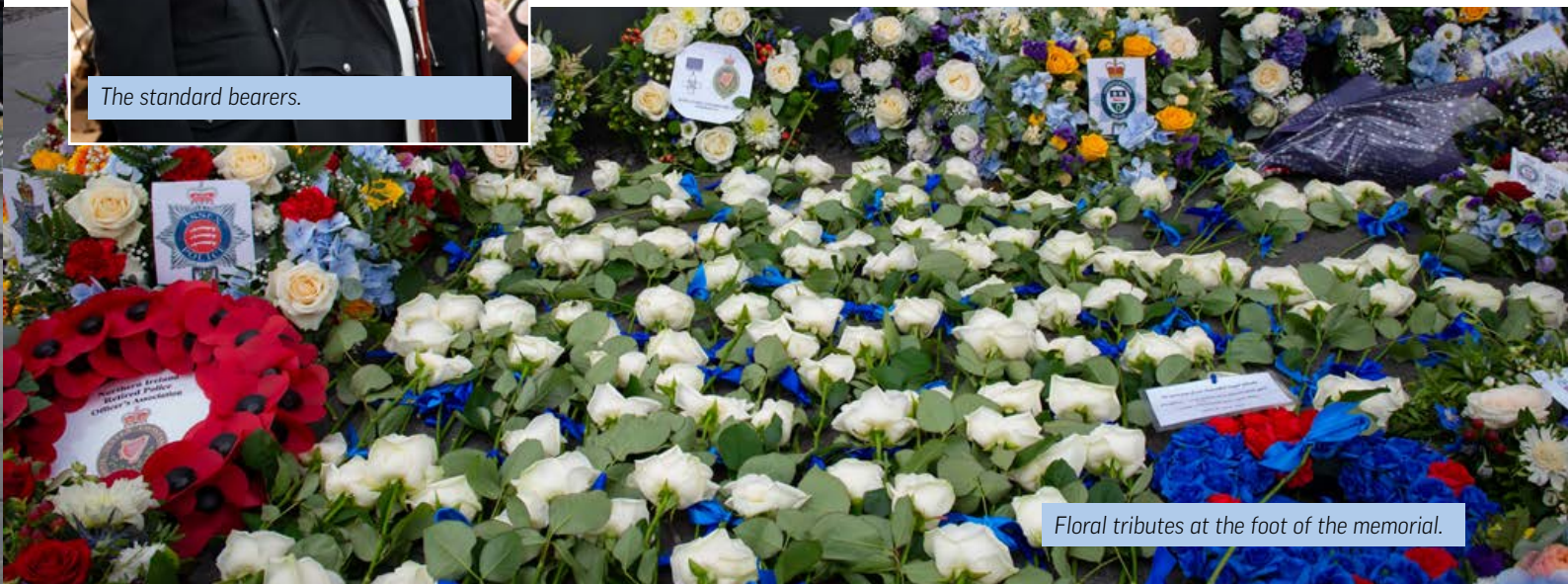
"Having been to the arboretum several times myself, I can vouch for what a lovely, peaceful place it is," says Rich, "There is an avenue of trees, called The Beat, where each force has its own tree and memorial plaque and now with this new memorial there is a real focal point for people to remember fallen officers."

"It is not too far from the West Midlands so I would encourage officers to make the trip out there and take a look for themselves. It is a great place for some quiet reflection."

Guests at the service at the UK Police Memorial.



The standard bearers.



Floral tributes at the foot of the memorial.



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Kate still hopes for widows' pensions success

CAMPAIGNER VOWS TO CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS

The widow of a West Midlands Police dog handler who died on duty in 1987 is still hoping for a successful conclusion to her campaign for lifelong pensions for all police widows after a judge rejected a legal challenge on existing pension regulations.

Kate Hall is among a number of widows, widowers and civil partners demanding changes to the current regulations which mean the survivors of officers in the 1987 Police Pension Scheme are forced to forfeit their pensions if they chose to re-marry or co-habit with a partner.

Mr Justice Fordham dismissed the claims after several days of legal argument at Manchester Administrative Court but did grant permission to appeal on two specified grounds: the application of the right to marry and his decision on justification.

Speaking after the ruling, Kate described the latest setback as "devastating" but urged supporters to "take a breath" and prepare

for the next round of the battle in the courts.

She told them: "Having read the judge's comments and ploughed my way through his judgement, I was relieved to see that there has always been a realistic prospect that our campaign would be successful.

"I would not have started our campaign if I hadn't believed this to be the case, but I can sleep easier now.

"The ruling was devastating for us all. But for now, we need to take a breath and be happy - not exactly the right word but I'm at a loss for a better one at the moment - that we are getting a second chance at justice.

"I know that is far easier said than done but we have survived worse than this."

Under the current rules, widows, widowers

and civil partners of police officers in receipt of an ordinary survivors' pension are often left facing a choice between companionship in later life and keeping their financial support.

Kate's husband, PC Colin Hall, was a police dog handler and served with the West Midlands Police for 21 years.

On Sunday 29 November 1987, he was dispatched with a number of his colleagues to tackle a disturbance at a block of flats and, having dealt with the incident, he suffered a heart attack and died at the scene at the age of 40. Kate was 24 at the time with a four-year-old daughter.

She began her campaign in June 2014 calling for a UK-wide policy on survivors' pensions which would see those who remarry or cohabit after the loss of their spouse retain their pension entitlement in full regardless of how their spouse died. Her campaign also calls for reinstatement of pensions revoked due to remarriage or cohabitation.

This is the current model in Northern Ireland and is the UK-wide policy for the majority of widows, widowers and civil partners of armed forces personnel.

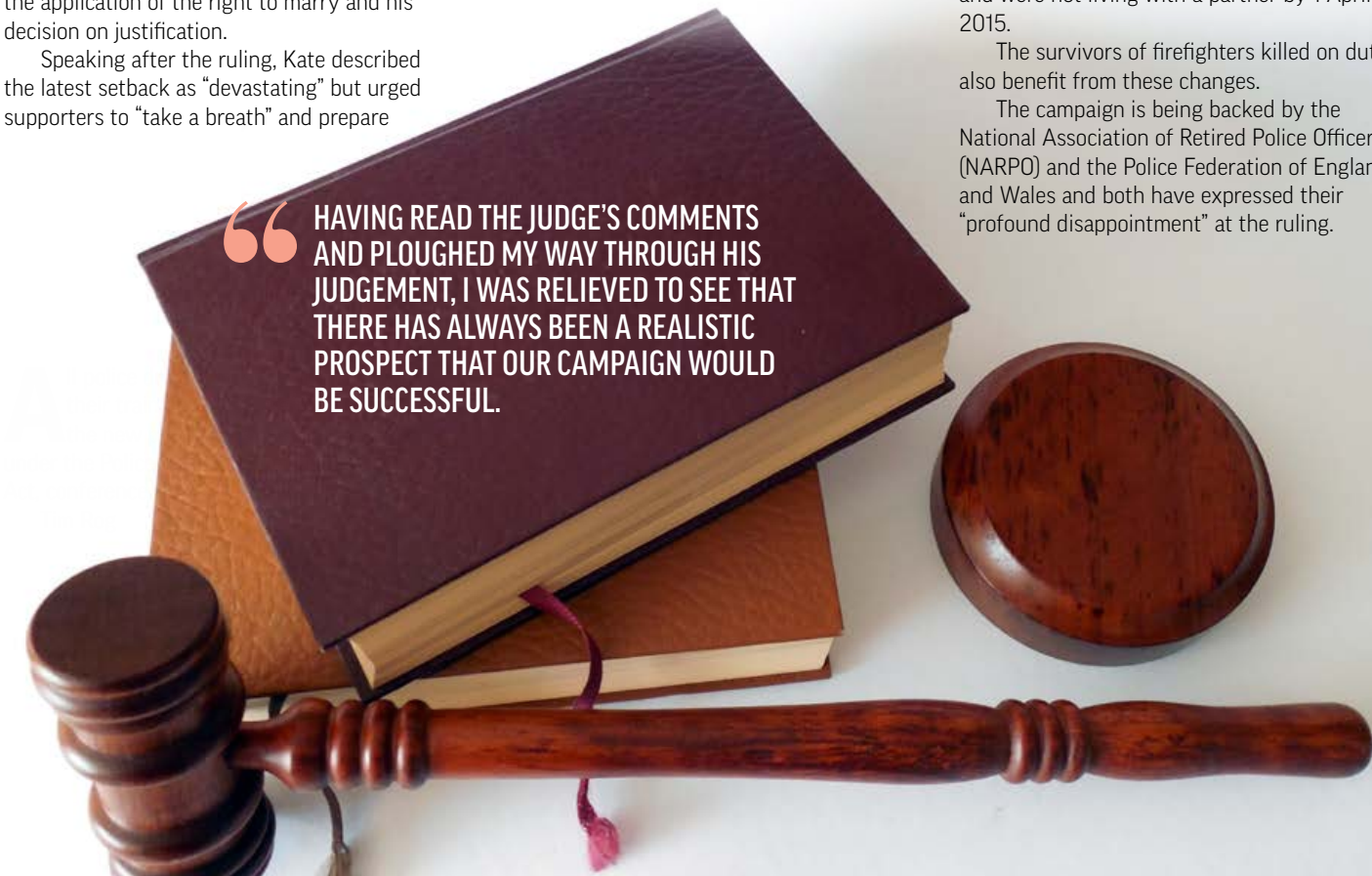
Kate's campaign has already achieved an amendment to the Police (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2006 which came into force on 18 January 2016.

The widows, widowers and civil partners of police officers killed in the line of duty and covered by the 1987 Police Pension Regulations now receive their pensions for life if they were in receipt of a special or augmented pension and remained unmarried and were not living with a partner by 1 April 2015.

The survivors of firefighters killed on duty also benefit from these changes.

The campaign is being backed by the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO) and the Police Federation of England and Wales and both have expressed their "profound disappointment" at the ruling.

“HAVING READ THE JUDGE'S COMMENTS AND PLOUGHED MY WAY THROUGH HIS JUDGEMENT, I WAS RELIEVED TO SEE THAT THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A REALISTIC PROSPECT THAT OUR CAMPAIGN WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL.”





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Officers honoured with Queen's Police Medal

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD RECOGNISES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLICING

West Midlands Police officers PC Mat Evans and Sergeant Antony Ashton have been awarded the prestigious Queen's Police Medal (QPM) for the outstanding contributions they have made to policing and protecting the public from harm.

As well as the two Federated officers, former Federation workplace representative Karen Geddes, who is now a superintendent, was also awarded the QPM.

Mat hit the headlines last year when he won a regional Police Bravery Award for tackling a knifeman during an off-duty day trip to London.

But the QPM comes in wider recognition of a career throughout which he has gone out of his way to ensure the safety of the communities he serves.

In 2009, Mat realised that gangs were responsible for a 58 per cent increase in

pickpocketing and distraction-type crimes against elderly, disabled and vulnerable members of the local community.

Acting on his own initiative he created Operation Share, a national network of more than 300 police officers dedicated to identifying offenders by sharing information on transient pickpocket gangs who try to avoid detection by touring the country's shopping centres.

As a result, crime rates for these types of offences dropped by 42 per cent between 2011 and 2019 and produced an estimated saving of more than £11 million to the criminal justice system and community.

On 12 October 2019, Mat was enjoying a day out in London when he witnessed a violent, armed offender stab a member of the public in the heart in the grounds of Royal London Hospital.

Despite having no protective equipment or help, he intervened and put himself between the attacker and the victim to prevent the attack continuing and worsening. When the offender ran off Mat chased him down a busy high street and brought him to the ground.

The victim was given urgent first aid and then received emergency heart surgery at the scene and miraculously survived thanks to the officer's courageous actions.

Sergeant Ashton has played a key role in reducing violence as part of the Force dedicated gangs team in Coventry.

His work has helped contribute to an 82 per cent reduction in firearms offences and 65 per cent fall in violence between October 2020 and May 2021. He has been involved in securing injunctions to stop violence and drugs, and worked with partner agencies to ensure those at risk of becoming involved in crime have been diverted away.

West Midlands Police Federation deputy secretary Chris James said: "The Queen's Police Medal is a tremendous accolade and Mat, Tony and Karen richly deserve this special recognition for their outstanding professionalism and dedication to duty.

"They personify all that is good about policing and we are extremely proud of their outstanding achievements."

“ THE QUEEN'S POLICE MEDAL IS A TREMENDOUS ACCOLADE AND MAT, TONY AND KAREN RICHLY DESERVE THIS SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR THEIR OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONALISM AND DEDICATION TO DUTY. THEY PERSONIFY ALL THAT IS GOOD ABOUT POLICING AND WE ARE EXTREMELY PROUD OF THEIR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS.



Officer assaults: offenders should be severely punished

FEDERATION CHAIR REFUTES CLAIMS THAT TOUGHER SENTENCES ARE INEFFECTIVE IN REDUCING ASSAULTS

West Midlands Police Federation chair Rich Cooke has questioned claims that tougher sentences are ineffective in reducing assaults on emergency services workers.

Rich said stiff penalties help send the message that such attacks are unacceptable, show support for frontline workers in their jobs and are simply the justice officers deserve as victims of crime.

He said: "They deserve to do their jobs free from the threat and fear of violence.

"We don't accept attacks on people in other professions so why should we accept attacks on police officers for simply doing

their jobs?

"Frankly, deterrent or not - and I hardly think it will encourage violence - those who attack emergency workers are attacking us all, society itself. Offenders should be punished most severely as a result."

"As a Federation we're proud of the campaign work we've done to support and protect our members and we now need the support and protection of the courts, so that if you assault a police officer you can expect to go to prison."

Rich's comments follow the publication of a report by the charity Transform Justice 'Protect the protectors? Do criminal sanctions reduce

violence against police and NHS staff?'

The report states it takes a closer, evidence-based look at increased penalties for assaults against emergency workers and demonstrates the ineffectiveness of this approach on any level.

Steve Hartshorn, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, took part in a panel discussion to coincide with the report's launch which asked: 'Will harsher sanctions reduce assaults on police and NHS workers?'

Asked of his personal experience of officers being assaulted when on duty, Steve said: "I have been assaulted countless times and, to go back to when I first started as a new officer in 1995, there was an ethos then that it was part of the job.

"It was in the early 2000s I think and there was a court case where a judge basically reaffirmed that it was part of the job to get assaulted but it never felt right because everyone has a right to go to work and to be treated properly."

He added: "It's the minority of the public that cause these assaults on officers and it does leave lasting effects on police officers."

“ AS A FEDERATION WE'RE PROUD OF THE CAMPAIGN WORK WE'VE DONE TO SUPPORT AND PROTECT OUR MEMBERS AND WE NOW NEED THE SUPPORT AND PROTECTION OF THE COURTS, SO THAT IF YOU ASSAULT A POLICE OFFICER YOU CAN EXPECT TO GO TO PRISON. ”

Detectives' forum welcomes HMIC's call for bonuses

BID TO TACKLE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ISSUES

The new head of HMIC says forces should consider offering bonus payments to detectives to help tackle a shortfall of 5,000 investigators nationally, a suggestion backed by the Police Federation National Detectives' Forum (PFNDF).

Andy Cooke, chief inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and a former detective himself, discussed the fact that the number of detectives in major crime units had dropped by 28 per cent in the past decade during an interview with Police TV. The proportion of crimes solved has dropped from 14 per cent to six per cent over the same period.

He asked: "If you're trying to attract people into being a detective, should it carry a bounty as part of that? Should there be a bounty on the achievement of passing the various detective exams?"

"It's an issue that police need to consider, because changing the whole mindset of people in a short period of time to allow us to have sufficient detectives across the country isn't going to happen quickly. So there needs to be



some different thinking by far more intelligent people than me."

Glyn Pattinson, chair of the PFNDF, has welcomed the comments: "I have the utmost respect for Andy Cooke and everything he talks about in this interview is exactly what we have been saying through the PFNDF for years.

"The attraction - and retention - of detectives is a real issue and we fully support the use of incentives such as targeted variable payments to help reward those who have worked hard to pass the National Investigators' Examination and go on to achieve PIP2 accreditation."

Jon Nott, deputy secretary of the forum and a West Midlands Police Federation rep, explained: "Currently, it is a postcode lottery as

to whether detectives get any extra payments. They automatically lose the best part of £1,200 when coming off a 24/7 pattern and losing the unsocial hours allowance. There is then the stress of having to study for and pass the exam as well as then completing the portfolio.

"This is all done while carrying a workload that is ever increasing and carries with it in some cases enormous risk for both the detective and the Force. This work doesn't ever go away, you don't hand it over to the next incoming shift; it stays there and you struggle to switch off from it.

"Yes, you earn over-time when dealing with jobs but that means that you are away from family and then get the court warnings for lengthy periods of time, which mean you struggle to get leave.

"A payment for passing the exam and becoming a detective would be welcomed and to have it agreed at a national rate so that all are receiving the same amount would be welcomed rather than the current variation from force to force would be an added bonus."

Mr Cooke also argued that there should be more detectives in the senior ranks to act as role models.

He explained: "That whole sort of senior role model detective isn't as visible as perhaps it was when I was a detective inspector, detective chief inspector and detective superintendent," he said.

"Encouraging more detectives to actually go through towards senior officer ranks may be one way of doing it, but it's a difficult problem."

“ A PAYMENT FOR PASSING THE EXAM AND BECOMING A DETECTIVE WOULD BE WELCOMED AND TO HAVE IT AGREED AT A NATIONAL RATE SO THAT ALL ARE RECEIVING THE SAME AMOUNT WOULD BE WELCOMED RATHER THAN THE CURRENT VARIATION FROM FORCE TO FORCE WOULD BE AN ADDED BONUS.

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Wendy re
changing
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DI Wendy Bird.

OFFICER EXPLAINS THE CRIPPLING LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF VIRUS

A Federation member who received life-changing treatment for long Covid says she can “finally see a light at the end of the tunnel” after feeling “like a prisoner in her own home” over a year after being first diagnosed with the virus.

DI Wendy Bird, who has been an officer for West Midlands Police for nearly 30 years, wants to shine the light on hyperbaric oxygen therapy after she received the treatment to combat long Covid.

She was initially diagnosed with long Covid in March 2021, after first being infected shortly after turning 50 in January 2021. Since then, Wendy reveals that she has “never recovered”, having lived with a number of long Covid symptoms including severe fatigue, chronic headaches, tachycardia - when the heart rate is too fast - POTS (Postural Tachycardia Syndrome - an abnormal heart rate that occurs after sitting or standing), post-exertional malaise (the worsening of symptoms caused by chronic fatigue), daily nose bleeds and joint pain.

“At my worst, I couldn’t even manage a five-minute walk and didn’t have the energy to wash myself,” says mum-of-two Wendy who, before testing positive for Covid, was training for a marathon.

“Brain fog was one of the worst bits for me. I could only concentrate for 20 minutes in one go before I had to sleep or relax. On Mother’s Day, I spent half an hour in the supermarket but then had to sleep for three hours. I couldn’t even listen to music or watch TV as it affected me neurologically.

“And this didn’t just impact me - how could I look after my children when I struggled to

even get on the toilet? Simply walking up the stairs meant I got breathless and it felt like a heavy weight on my chest with someone squeezing my heart tightly.

“BRAIN FOG WAS ONE OF THE WORST BITS FOR ME. I COULD ONLY CONCENTRATE FOR 20 MINUTES IN ONE GO BEFORE I HAD TO SLEEP OR RELAX. ON MOTHER’S DAY, I SPENT HALF AN HOUR IN THE SUPERMARKET BUT THEN HAD TO SLEEP FOR THREE HOURS. I COULDN’T EVEN LISTEN TO MUSIC OR WATCH TV AS IT AFFECTED ME NEUROLOGICALLY.

“My confidence was completely gone. I was super slim before catching Covid and very fit, but I’ve since put on a lot of weight.

“To put it simply, I felt like the same person, just in somebody else’s body. I honestly felt like my life had been put on pause.”

As a result of her condition, Wendy was forced to take nine months off work, before making a gradual return to the job.

“At nine months post initial infection I went back to work and I was having to choose between working for an hour or showering, I didn’t have the energy for both,” she explained.

With both her physical health and mental wellbeing deteriorating, Wendy found herself searching for urgent treatment. That is when she came across Midland Diving Chamber, a hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment at Hospital of St Cross in Rugby, which involves people sitting in a chamber with a mask on breathing in pure oxygen for a total time of one hour and a half per session, every day for two to three weeks.

The chamber looks like a deep-sea diving chamber and simulates the level of pressure usually found 14 metres underwater, which causes pure oxygen to be forced into the body, being absorbed by cells and prompting regeneration.

The therapy, which is generally used to deal with decompression sickness in divers, costs around £200 per session.

A month after completing the treatment - a total of 21 sessions altogether - Wendy says she finally feels like there’s a light at the end of the tunnel.

“I’m walking again,” she said, “OK, I’m not climbing hills but I walked 13,000 steps the other night and 20,000 in one go, on holiday. I genuinely never thought I would be doing that again.

“There was a point where I wondered if that would be my life forever. I asked myself if I would ever run or if I would ever go out for a meal again. I felt like a prisoner in my own home.

“I’m finally able to work more hours and exercise again. I feel like I’ve been re-born. I’m finally getting the old Wendy back. And I’ll never take life for granted.”

Although she has not yet fully recovered, Wendy says she is now looking forward to the future.

“It’s onwards and upwards from here. Yes, the treatment was expensive but it was worth it to get my life back,” she added.

By sharing her story, Wendy hopes she can help others in her situation, who might be suffering from long Covid and looking for treatment.

She ended: “Life was isolating. I know how alone and down people can feel and know there are other people like me who are suffering at all ranks. I want them to know they’re not alone and there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

receives life-
treatment after
long Covid agony

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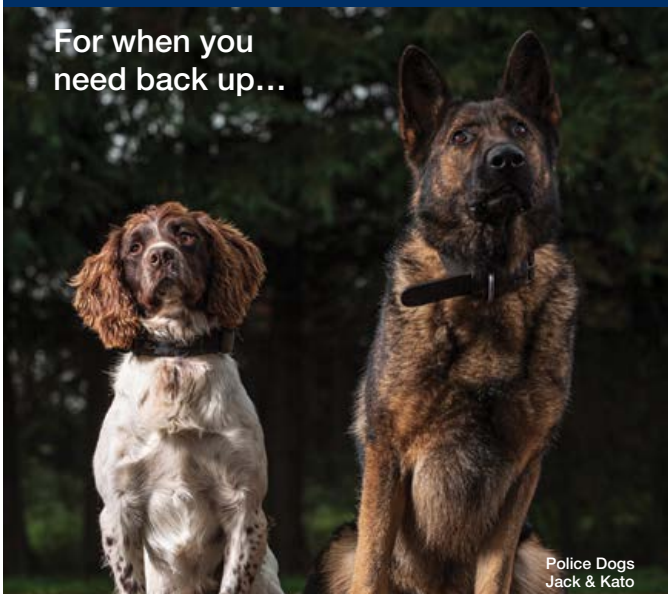


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Super-mum sergeant tells how she juggles work with volunteering as police cadet leader



Sergeant Dawn Twomey.

DAWN COMMITS TO PASSING ON KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO YOUNGSTERS INTERESTED IN POLICING

A sergeant with a passion for passing on her knowledge of the Force has told how she has spent the past three years juggling work along with volunteering as a police cadet leader at her son's unit.

Dawn Twomey, who has been working for West Midlands Police for the past 17 years, says it is the enthusiasm and commitment of the cadet members that keeps her enthusiasm for volunteering alive.

Jake, her 14-year-old son, is one of the

troops and hopes to follow in his mum's footsteps with his sight set on pursuing a career in forensics.

"I wanted to pass on my experience and knowledge of the police to younger generations and potentially future officers," said Dawn, "And that includes Jake. I've always been very wary about how much he knows about what I do, but this way, he can get a real insight into the Force, without it scaring him."

Dawn, who volunteers with the cadets of



Sergeant Dawn Twomey with son Jake.

the Solihull branch once every week for two hours, admits she is regularly rushing between her shifts and meetings.

The unit has around 30 members who have had opportunities to go out with police officers, as well as hear about different roles such as firearms and dog handler teams.

Dawn has been a leader for the past three years, with Jake becoming a cadet around seven months ago and now she says the troop is like an extended family, with most of the members even calling her 'Mum' now.

"A lot of these cadets come from some sort of challenging background but yet, every single one of them turns up, week-in-week-out," says Dawn, who explained that even during lockdown, the troop held virtual sessions for members to attend.

"It's their dedication to cadets, their commitment, and their want to be there and engage - that's what keeps me volunteering.

"The more I'm there, the more I love it. It's so rewarding."

Dawn says that a huge part of her role is to build bridges between the police and the community, and more specifically, younger people.

"Being able to meet with these youngsters every week definitely helps us develop a positive relationship between them and the Force. I hope I'm helping to change the perception of the police too - not just for them, but the cadets share what they've learned with their family and friends too, it's like a ripple effect," added Dawn.

"We, as police, get a lot from the sessions too. The cadets are quite happy to tell me about their opinions of the Force and the current challenges we're facing - and they don't hold back, on the good and the bad.

"We ask for their feelings on issues like knife crime and get important feedback on how we can approach and engage with younger generations as police officers.

"Building those relationships and seeing the cadets progress, that's what makes this role so rewarding for me."



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