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2017 – the year emphasis was put on officer safety

By Paul Laughlin, secretary, Dyfed Powys Police Federation

Welcome to this, the last edition for this year of our magazine, providing Federation members with updates on the issues affecting them at work and beyond.

This is also my penultimate column since in April next year I will be retiring from the Force and venturing into pastures new. I will share more of my thoughts on policing in the March edition.

At the end of each year, I think we all spend a little bit of time looking back on events over the previous 12 months and I guess this year it’s a little more poignant for me as I approach the end of my policing career.

Of course, we are all aware of the immense pressures on the police service at the moment. As the Police Federation warned - right at the start of the Government’s cuts programme – cuts have consequences.

We were told that we were crying wolf and scaremongering but I honestly believe that we have completely disproved those accusations.

Our service to the public has suffered, crime has gone up and we are getting to the stage where many forces are having to give serious consideration to which parts of the service they can no longer deliver.

One force – Nottinghamshire – has been criticised for saying that it may no longer investigate shoplifting as it struggles to balance the books. The county’s Police and Crime Commissioner Paddy Tipping is quoted in his local paper as saying: “We will do our best with the resources we have got. Is shoplifting as important as investigating a serious sexual assault? It is not.

So, there are jobs that we do at the moment that will have to take a lower priority. If people report shoplifting will the police come? Probably not. We don’t go out to attempted vehicle break-ins unless the person is vulnerable.

“People are upset about that but it is a reality. As things toughen up there will be jobs that happen where the police will not attend. I think it is clear – if we don’t come we don’t investigate it.”

I think that other police leaders will be watching this development with interest so we will have to see if others follow suit. But an increase in crime and the possible threat to the policing service offered to our communities are only part of the story.

The cuts have also had another consequence. We have seen an increase in the number of officers assaulted as they go about their duties. Is this because we are thinner on the ground or is it because of a shift in society and how people view police officers? I am not sure. But I am pleased that the Federation’s seven-point plan on officer – and staff – assaults has now been adopted by most, if not all, forces and it is good to see MPs supporting our Protect the Protectors campaign and the Private Members’ Bill which will introduce tougher sentences for those who attack emergency service workers.

It is not just officers’ physical wellbeing that we need to protect though. Officers struggling to cope with the demands of the role, low morale, increased demand and reduced numbers are feeling the strain in terms of their own mental health.

More and more officers are reporting stress-related illnesses. Thankfully, on the back of the success of the seven-point plan on officer assaults, the Federation is launching a similar pledge on officer wellbeing and I am hoping that this will be adopted by forces nationwide too.

We have to look at our own so that they, in turn, can look after our communities. We can’t ignore the mental health of our officers and staff and more needs to be done to ensure that they can access the support they need.

The very fact that we are all talking about this issue is a massive step forward. For far too long, officers have suffered in silence but we want to ensure that members know that they don’t have to continue to do that. Help and support is available.

If you are concerned about your own mental wellbeing or that of a colleague, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Federation office or your local workplace representative. As a Federation, we can help you access a number of initiatives and support programmes.

Finally, in writing this last column of 2017, I would like to extend a thank you to all officers – and staff – for their hard work protecting our communities over the last year. I know it’s been a tough year all-round but I also know that everyone has done their best to maintain a quality policing service for the people of Dyfed Powys.

I appreciate many of you will be working over the Christmas period but I hope that you are also able to get some time off to enjoy time with your family and friends. Have a great Christmas and a happy new year. Stay safe.
Assaults bill wins support of MPs

A bill to give greater protection for police officers and emergency service workers has been widely supported by MPs.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Private Members’ Bill, introduced by Labour MP Chris Bryant, received unanimous support from MPs during its second reading in the House of Commons in October and has now passed through the committee stage after being scrutinised line by line by a smaller group of MPs.

Key clauses were amended or supported and the bill is expected to have its third reading and progress to statute in April 2018.

Support for the bill has been welcomed by the Police Federation and follows its nationwide Protect the Protectors campaign which has raised awareness of the rising numbers of assaults on the police and called for better protection in law for them, police staff and all emergency service workers.

Paul Laughlin, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, fully supported the bill’s progress.

“It has been well publicised that there has been a growing number of attacks on police and other emergency service workers lately. Sadly, these are all too often fobbed off as being ‘part of the job’. That view cannot be allowed to continue because an attack on those personnel should be seen as an attack on society,” he said.

“This proposed new legislation should provide tougher sentencing for those who assault police officers and police staff and our blue light colleagues.

“But crucially, it will also improve the way in which assailants who bite us or spit at us are handled so that emergency service workers do not have to wait weeks for test results.

“We hope this bill continues to get safe passage through Parliament so that those who assault police and other emergency service workers feel the full weight of the law. The increased punishment will hopefully act as a deterrent too.”

The bill will:

- Introduce new offences including wounding or assault when perpetrated against an emergency worker in the performance of their duties
- Compel those suspected of assault - including spitting - who may pose a health risk to undergo blood tests
- Make it an offence to refuse to undergo such tests, and
- Lay down tough sentences for those convicted of these new offences.

During the debate in the House of Commons, cross-party support and messages of thanks to Labour colleagues Holly Lynch (Halifax), who first championed the Federation’s Protect the Protectors campaign, and Mr Bryant were overwhelming.

MPs recounted some traumatic personal accounts of attacks on police, nurses, firefighters, paramedics and other blue light workers.

Calum Macleod, incoming chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: “The outpouring of public support has been astounding and a tremendous boost for those who take extreme risks to help others. We thank those who continue to support our calls to better Protect the Protectors.”
Local MPs speak out

Holly Lynch MP (pictured, right) spoke out in support of the Protect the Protectors campaign during this year’s national Police Federation conference in Birmingham in May. She is pictured with (left to right) facilitator Ian Collins, PC Mike Bruce, who was assaulted while serving West Midlands Police, and West Yorkshire Federation chair Nick Smart.

Welsh MPs were keen to add their voices in support of the assaults bill.

Plaid Cymru MP Ben Lake (Ceredigion) thanked Chris Bryant and said: “Does he agree that there is a real sense of anger and frustration not just among police officers but among other emergency workers when they see people walking out of court with, effectively, a slap on the wrist?”

Mr Bryant responded: “The Honorary Gentleman is absolutely right.

As one of the sponsors for the bill, Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) praised Mr Bryant for garnering cross-party support and said: “I know from my meetings with the minister for policing and the fire service and with justice ministers that they genuinely desire a serious, useful and practical piece of legislation to put on the statute book to ensure better legal protections for emergency workers.

He added: “The Dyfed Powys Police force area has some of the lowest crime rates anywhere in the country - it is a truly wonderful place to live: we do not have high levels of crime - but what struck me when talking to these officers was the sheer frequency with which assaults occur even in such a police force area.”

It is, he said, important to recognise the physical, psychological and emotional impact that an assault can have on an officer and their family. And he told MPs about a number of cases that officers in his area had spoken to him about.

“In one incident in my area, when police officers sought to arrest a man wanted for questioning about a domestic assault, the man drove at them in a tractor. He went on to attack one of them with a long-handled sickle - a sword, basically. He killed the police dog that was with the officer and the officer narrowly missed being seriously injured. No-one should think for a moment that such an incident does not leave a serious and deep mark on all the officers present at the scene.”

Many of our police and emergency workers, he said, believe their experiences of assault are not treated seriously enough by the judiciary and that laughable sentences are given to their attackers.

“Another female officer in my police force area shared an incident with me. She was punched in the face, causing her lip to bleed. The suspect was known to be infected with Hepatitis C and had a cut on their hand as well. That immediately put the officer in significant danger, as there was a possibility that her own blood could be contaminated,” the MP explained.

“The officer was, of course, required to have blood tests and was prescribed antibiotics to try to prevent an infection. After two weeks’ leave, the officer returned to duty. However, she will not receive her blood test results for another eight weeks and feels that her life has in effect been put on hold. It was particularly galling for this female officer to hear that the suspect, who was convicted, received a prison sentence of only five weeks, which means that they will be out of prison weeks before the officer gets her blood test results.”

Talking about the proposed powers to take blood samples and non-intimate samples such as saliva, he revealed: “When I began my research, I confess that I did not appreciate the significance of this issue in the context of assaults on emergency workers. One of the officers I met last week described an assault when she went to assist a woman at a domestic incident.

“The woman turned aggressively on the police officer and attacked her, causing several injuries including significant bleeding when she dug her long fingernails into her hand. The attacker then shouted at the officer that she was carrying a blood disease. For the past five months, that officer has been living with stress and anxiety over what she may or may not have been infected with.

“No samples have been taken from the attacker to check whether or not she was lying, so the officer has faced the long process of being tested herself. She told me how she has been afraid of just how much physical contact she should give her own children for fear of passing something on. The right to take samples from suspects will rapidly accelerate the process of determining a potential contraction and will give a confident assurance to those emergency workers affected that we are here to help them through the situation.”

The Dyfed Powys Police force area has some of the lowest crime rates anywhere in the country - it is a truly wonderful place to live: we do not have high levels of crime - but what struck me when talking to these officers was the sheer frequency with which assaults occur even in such a police force area.
The Force has been praised for the efficient way it manages demand and for changing the way it deploys its people and resources in a review by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

But the PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) report also notes areas for improvement around the Force’s ability to use its resources and put systems in place to plan for the future and concludes that the Force’s overall grading was “requires improvement”.

Inspectors said the Force:
- “Was good” at understanding the demands for its services;
- “Required improvement” at how it uses its resources; and
- “Required improvement” at planning for the future.

Paul Laughlin, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, said: “In a landscape that is constantly changing for police forces across the country, it is satisfying that the inspection team feels our force is managing demand for its increasingly stretched services.

“We are striving to improve all areas of the way we go about our business and we believe we are building the foundations for improvements in the months ahead.

“Like all other forces across the country, however, improving our efficiency is becoming harder and harder with the increased demand placed upon our ever-dwindling numbers. The pressure on our officers has got greater and that inevitably takes its toll on them as they try to do a professional job for the communities they are proud to serve.”

HM Inspector of Constabulary Wendy Williams said: “Dyfed Powys Police has again been judged overall as ‘requires improvement’ in the efficiency with which it keeps people safe and reduces crime.

“Such an audit would help the Force inform its recruitment, selection and promotion processes in order to identify the best people for the job and to develop people in their roles.

“The Force also needs to improve the way it plans for the future. For example, the Force needs to make better use of national recruitment and development schemes, external recruitment, and other recruitment opportunities to ensure it is able to recruit, promote and develop people with the skills it needs.

“On a more positive note, the Force has made good progress in developing a more strategic approach to partnership working. It has also invested well in ICT, which has resulted in significant savings and a reduction in demand across a number of areas.”

The Force was inspected by HMICFRS as part of the third annual efficiency reports which examine how well police forces in England and Wales understand demand, use their resources and plan for the future.

Two forces have been graded as ‘outstanding’, 30 as ‘good’, 10 as “requiring improvement”, two more than last year, and no force as “inadequate”.

The overall finding was that in an environment of increasingly complex crime and changing demand, police forces are generally continuing to manage their resources well.

The report concludes that while most police forces throughout the country have risen impressively to the challenges they face, policing remains under significant stress. Forces need to be more ambitious and innovative in terms of their plans for the future; the problems facing those forces that fail to do so could potentially prove overwhelming.
Could you be a Fed rep?

The Force’s constables, sergeants and inspecting ranks are being given the opportunity to represent, support and negotiate on key issues for their colleagues by putting themselves forward to be a Federation workplace representative.

Nominees are being sought for upcoming elections for positions across the Force area.

Among those featured in the national campaign to encourage officers to put themselves forward to become Federation representatives is North Wales Sergeant Sam Roberts, a member of the Federation’s Interim National Board and chair of the Women’s Reserve.

She explains: “I have been a rep for almost 20 years. I chose to represent women, not because I am anti-men or thought it would be an easier option, but because I could see that women were not treated fairly. I have never regretted that decision for a moment.”

Around 28 per cent of officers are female but only 11 per cent of Federation reps are women. Only three out of 40 Federation branch chairs are women.

Sam adds: “I do not for a minute suggest that men are not representing the views of women, but I think women have issues that they would feel more comfortable discussing with a female rep: menopause, sexual discrimination, post-natal depression, to name just a few. There are excellent female officers out there, 38,000 to be precise, who need their voices to be heard. The PFEW needs to be representative at local and national level.

“We all want what is best for officers in the organisation, for them to be treated fairly and for someone to be there for them when they are not.

“So ladies (and gents), help us to encourage female officers to stand for election as Fed reps. I want to see the new-look PFEW looking like those it represents. And if there are any ladies out there looking to join PFEW - make a stand by standing.”

Paul Laughlin, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, has also supported the campaign.

“The life of a Federation representative can be really challenging, particularly when you consider it’s a voluntary role that you carry out alongside your normal duties,” he explains. “Given that police officers are really stretched at the moment, I can understand that there may be some reluctance to put yourself forward for a Fed rep role. However, at a time when officers are under such pressure, it is even more important that we have effective representation for our members.

“Yes, the role can be difficult but it also incredibly rewarding and it is so satisfying to know that you have helped a colleague through a difficult time.”

Federation reps don’t just deal with detail and factual information on issues like pay, pensions and grievances, they can also offer moral support and friendly advice to officers who may be going through a difficult time at work for whatever reason. Reps also have access to third-party sources who may be able to aid officers, if they don’t know the answer themselves.

As part of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), Dyfed Powys reps also have the chance to put themselves forward for the national body whenever opportunities arise.

PFEW was established in 1919 and has represented the interests of officers from the ranks of constable to chief inspector ever since. The organisation is funded by monthly subscriptions from officers and the Federation works on three levels: local, regional and national.

There is a Police Federation branch in every force together representing 120,000 officers, which is 97 per cent of the rank and file.

For further information and to read case studies from officers whose careers and lives have been helped in some way by Federation reps, visit: http://www.polfed.org/campaigning/3733.aspx

Yes, the role can be difficult but it also incredibly rewarding and it is so satisfying to know that you have helped a colleague through a difficult time.

Reps@work

Dyfed Powys Police Federation www.dppf.org

Election process

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) holds elections every three years. The triennial election period was due to start autumn 2016 but new regulations changing the way elections are run following Sir David Normington’s independent review of PFEW are now with the Home Office and are expected to be in place at the end of this year.

The new system

The new process will provide a rank-less structure with no more separate rank committees at local or national level. The number of officials on the National Board will be reduced from 30 to 24.

The National Board along with the National Council, which is made up of local Federation chairs and secretaries and other individuals from protected characteristics groups, will be the key decision-making bodies for the organisation. The new process allows members to vote for local chairs as well as the national chair via a new electronic voting system operated via the members’ database.

The current triennial period has been extended by the Home Office until the regulations are completed and the new voting process can take effect.

Current process:

- Members vote for workplace Federation reps
- Workplace Fed reps vote for Joint Branch Board executive members
- The local chairs and secretaries sit on the Interim National Council
- Regional rank delegates to conference vote for their Interim National Board reps
- Interim National Board members vote on principal national officer roles – including the chair and general secretary

The new process the federation is working to while waiting confirmation in the new regulations, following Home Office approval:

- Members vote for workplace reps to form the Branch Council
- The Branch Council elects the Branch Board members
- Members elect the branch chair
- The Branch Board elects the secretary
- Branch Board chair and secretary make up the National Council
- Members vote to elect the national chair
- National Council votes to elect the National Board
- National Board selects the general secretary
- National Board votes in remaining principal officers.
A survey carried out by the Police Federation National Detectives’ Forum found that almost three quarters (71 per cent) of the Force’s detectives believe their workload was either too high or much too high in the 12 months leading up to September this year. And low morale and stress are continuing to cause problems for officers. The PFNDF carried out a survey of detectives across England and Wales between 1 and 24 September.

And the localised results paint a damning picture of the problems facing Dyfed Powys detectives with 71 officers filling out the survey, compared to just 31 in 2015.

40 per cent said the cuts have had a major impact on their morale
16 per cent said they have had a major impact on their physical health and wellbeing
11 per cent said they have had a major impact on their mental health and wellbeing
57 per cent said they had substantially increased their overall workload
43 per cent said they had substantially increased how fatigued they felt and
37 per cent said they had substantially increased how stressful they found their jobs.

Crucially, only just over a third (35 per cent) said their workload enabled them to provide the service needed to victims of crime either most or all of the time while only 30 per cent said they could provide the service needed to witnesses.

And 35 per cent said they felt emotionally drained from work either most or all the time, with the same percentage saying they felt their job was either very or extremely stressful.

Dyfed Powys detectives said the high levels of personal responsibility, lack of officers in their team/unit, the high-risk nature of the job, high workload, frequent organisational change and unrealistic expectations of the public and partner agencies were the key causes of their stress.

More than three quarters (77 per cent) felt the role of the detective role was seen as less valuable to the Force than it used to be.

“The results of this survey make alarming reading,” says Paul Laughlin, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, “Detectives play a vital role within the Force and it is worrying that they feel over-worked, stressed and under-valued.

While we are obviously worried about their health and wellbeing, we are also concerned that they feel they are unable to provide an effective service for both victims of crime and witnesses.

“We will be discussing the survey findings with the Force and hope that we can put measures in place to ensure that detectives are properly supported.”

The PFNDF handed out awards for Detective Investigation of the Year; Services to Detectives; the technology-based Smarter Detective; and the New Trainee Detective of the Year during the ceremony.

A seminar to discuss issues facing detectives and to recognise those at the top of their game was attended by hundreds of officers from across England and Wales.

The Police Federation National Detectives’ Forum (PFNDF) was held in Northamptonshire in October. The two-day seminar also involved an evening ceremony for the forum’s annual awards.

“The detectives’ seminar provides the perfect opportunity for detectives to meet up, discuss the issues they are facing, share best practice and generally network with colleagues,” says Paul Laughlin, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation.

“We will be discussing the survey findings with the Force and hope that we can put measures in place to ensure that detectives are properly supported.”

The results of this survey make alarming reading. Detectives play a vital role within the Force and it is worrying that they feel over-worked, stressed and under-valued.
Dyfed Powys Police Federation is working with the Force to launch a new nine-point stress plan to ensure that officer wellbeing is prioritised.

The plan, which is hoped will be launched as soon as possible in the New Year, will follow a national template launched by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

“I am pleased to see the Federation taking the lead on this issue,” says Paul Laughlin, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, “Hard on the heels of the success of the seven-point plan on officer assaults, which has now been rolled-out across the country, this plan should ensure that forces recognise the need to support officer wellbeing.

“We have seen a growing number of officers reporting that the pressures of the job are affecting their mental and emotional wellbeing so I hope that this plan will be adopted by all forces. Our members are committed to protecting their communities but, in turn, the police service must protect them.”

Health and safety representatives from all 43 branches of the Police Federation have been presented with the template and it has also been shared with the Scottish Police Federation, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland, the British Transport Police, the Civic Nuclear Constabulary and the Ministry of Defence.

Jason Kwee, national health and safety lead for the Federation, has been instrumental in pulling together the plan, which was presented at the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) health and safety working group and accepted in principle.

“As a forum, we looked at what was in place to tackle stress in the workplace. We were only able to identify one risk-based process to identify and reduce stress which was the HSE management standards (SMS),” Jason explains.

Calum Macleod has been elected as the national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

He will take up the post on 1 January 2018.

In a statement after his appointment was confirmed, Calum explained: “I am honoured and privileged to be elected to the role of chair; with that comes the responsibility of ensuring that the organisation truly represents the views of rank and file police officers across England and Wales. Our organisational reform is nearing completion and now we must focus all our energy on achieving positive change for our members. Let’s not sugar coat the current situation that we are facing – policing is in a critical state. We will continue to be robust with stakeholders and demand that they acknowledge and address the real issues facing the service and our members.”

Calum has been vice chair since April 2016 and takes over from Steve White who became chair in May 2014.

Che Donald has been elected as vice chair and also takes over from 1 January 2018.

Paul Laughlin, the secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, has congratulated Calum and Che on their new roles.

“I wish them both well as they take over at the helm of the Police Federation,” he says, “This is a critical time not just for the Federation as it starts to operate under the new regulations following the reform introduced through the Normington report but also for the police service as it continues to feel the effects of the Government’s cuts programme.”

We have seen a growing number of officers reporting that the pressures of the job are affecting their mental and emotional wellbeing so I hope that this plan will be adopted by all forces. Our members are committed to protecting their communities but, in turn, the police service must protect them.
St David’s Hall in Cardiff hosted this year’s National Police Memorial Day service.

The service, on Sunday 24 September, was attended by chief officers, Federation representatives from across England and Wales and Home Secretary Amber Rudd. But the most important guests of all were the families of fallen officers.

Dyfed Powys Police Federation was represented at the service by chairman Mark Bleasdale and secretary Paul Laughlin.

Mark said afterwards: “The National Police Memorial Day is a key event in the policing year, providing an opportunity for police officers of all ranks to honour fallen officers and stand side by side with their families.

“It is a moving and poignant event, reminding us all of the unique role police officers play in society and the fact that all too often they give their lives in serving their communities. We should never forget their sacrifice.”

During the act of rememberance, Gwent PC Lowri Davies lit a candle in memory of fallen officers from Wales. Lowri is the daughter of Gwent PC Terence John Davies who died on 23 August 1990, when he was 34. He was cycling home from a tour of duty at Maindee when he was hit by a stolen car that failed to stop and died of his injuries.

During the service four candles, one for each of the nations of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, were lit, with family members again taking part in this part of the service.

The other candles were lit as follows:

- Thelma Corkey, widow of Reserve Constable Samuel Snowdon Corkey, who died on 16 November 1982, aged 41, lit the candle for Northern Ireland.
- Laura Wiggins, daughter of PC Douglas Wiggins, Police Scotland, who died on 3 May 2016, aged 55, lit the candle for Scotland.
- Pamela Knee, sister of PC John Egerton, Greater Manchester Police, who was murdered on 11 March 1982, aged 20, lit the candle for England.

The names of the six officers who have lost their lives since the last memorial day service, held at St Paul’s Cathedral in London last year, were read out by national Police...
Federation chair Steve White:

DC Joe Mabuto (42) of Thames Valley Police who died on 27 September 2016.

Inspector Mark Estall (45) of Essex Police who died on 5 January 2017.

PC Paul Briggs (43) of Merseyside Police who died on 21 January 2017.

PC Austin Jackson (38) of Leicestershire Police who died on 16 March 2017.

PC Keith Palmer QGM (48) of the Metropolitan Police who died on 22 March 2017, and

PC Gareth Browning (36) of Thames Valley Police who died on 1 April 2017.

The service began with processional music led by the band of the South Wales Police and Corps Drums and a welcome from the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Councillor Bob Derbyshire, before a new book of remembrance, provided by The Police Roll of Honour Trust, was dedicated with prayers led by Canon Adrian Gatrill of Police Chaplaincy UK and the swearing of an oath of allegiance by all serving officers led by Chief Constable Sara Thornton, chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council.

Along with hymns and prayers, which included participation from the family members of four fallen officers, the Cor Meibion Llanelli Male Choir performed two songs and the Home Secretary gave a reading from the gospel of St John.

As the National Police Memorial Day Orchestra played Abide With Me and the Last Post was sounded, petals of remembrance, representing all who have lost their lives, fluttered down from the gallery in a very moving feature of the service. After a moment of silence, Reveille was sounded.

The service ended with an act of dedication, led by South Wales Chief Constable Peter Vaughan, a blessing led by the Archbishop of Cardiff George Stack and Archbishop of Wales John Davies, and the national anthems Land Of My Fathers and God Save The Queen.

National Police Memorial Day was founded by Joe Holness, following the brutal killing of his fellow Kent Police officer Jon Odell, at Margate, in December 2000.

The inaugural service was held at St Paul’s Cathedral in 2004.

HRH The Prince of Wales is patron of the National Memorial Day charity.
A clinical expert has explained that officers in Post-Incident Procedure (PIP) situations are often being required to give their account of what happened “too soon” without giving the brain enough time to rest and process incidents.

Neuropsychology speaker Dr Jess Millar was addressing a two-day national PIP seminar held in Staffordshire. It was organised by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) and led by its firearms lead Che Donald.

“It is interesting to hear this latest expert opinion and I hope that forces and the Independent Police Complaints Commission will take it on board,” says Dyfed Powys Police Federation secretary Paul Laughlin.

“We all appreciate the need to ensure that thorough investigations are carried out when there is a death or serious injury following police contact. However, we must also ensure that the officers – and staff – are properly protected and supported during what is a very traumatic and stressful time.”

Other issues discussed at the seminar included how to get the most out of the post-incident brain, trauma, spatial processing and genetics, body-worn video and post-incident management.

The 200 delegates were faced with PIP scenarios by Dave Blocksidge of Mind Your Evidence, an independent organisation which looks at expert witness testimony and memory training solutions. Dave also delivered a session on body-worn video and recall.

DCC Simon Chesterman, firearms lead for the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC), spoke via video to stress that deaths involving rearms officers are “thankfully extremely rare” but when they happen it is essential that police follow established Authorised Professional Practice (APP) to protect themselves.

He said that it should not always be necessary to separate officers in a PIP situation, particularly with the advent of body-worn video.

Specific incidents were also discussed to give further evidence to delegates with DCs Chris Mead and Temporary Chief Inspector Julia Hands from Cambridgeshire Constabulary giving an account of their role as Post-Incident Managers after a fatal shooting.

They covered issues such as post-trauma triage and how to safeguard the anonymity of officers involved.

Tim Godwin, representing the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), said the watchdog is making efforts to speed up its investigations and invited challenge if it appears to falter.

He discussed the forthcoming IPCC restructure and best PIP practice, adding: “When we talk about separation of officers in a post-incident situation we don’t mean isolation - they should have access to a Federation rep and support - this is purely to maintain integrity.”

Che said the seminar was vitally important to help aid understanding of the issues: “The seminar is not just about firearms - it is much wider than that and the importance of the PIP process affects not only firearms officers but all officers involved in the world of operational policing as well as the custody arena, where there are deaths and serious injuries.”

We all appreciate the need to ensure that thorough investigations are carried out when there is a death or serious injury following police contact. However, we must also ensure that the officers – and staff – are properly protected and supported during what is a very traumatic and stressful time.
Momentum rising for a change in pursuits law

Since September strong progress has been made in the Federation’s continued drive for change in legislation to better protect police drivers.

Tim Rogers, the national Federation lead on police pursuits, has discussed new developments in the campaign to change the law in a blog published at polfed.org.

He writes: “Currently the law leaves emergency response drivers open to prosecution because it fails to recognise the professional training officers undertake to carry out their duties. However, after years of campaigning, we have now reached some agreed actions with those able to make the long overdue changes.

“We have secured agreement from the Ministry of Justice, Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service, Department for Transport, IPCC and also the NPCC that a change in legislation is required in order to rectify the legislative flaw currently faced by our officers.

“Following this agreement, the Policing Minister - Nick Hurd - requested that this work be started by a joint NPCC and Federation submission to the Home Office to articulate what was required by the legislative change.

“In early October this was delivered, the focus no doubt assisted by the swell in coverage for the motorcycle enabled crime and subsequent pressure on Government regarding tactics and a reluctance for officers to engage two wheeled criminality.

“Disturbing increases in motorcycle facilitated crime around the country particularly in the Metropolitan Police area and the Midlands hit the headlines which all added to the momentum. Further reinforcement appeared with some “positive rhetoric” from the Home Secretary at the joint NPCC/APCC Summit stating that the “review” would be completed in the New Year. Still, positive rhetoric or not officers remain vulnerable until the legislation changes and we need to inform members of the ongoing risks.

“It’s clear that ministers on both sides of the House see this as a problem in need of urgent remedy. Offers of support have come direct with a number of decent meetings attended in October. This was aided greatly by a secondary plan led by Henry Bellingham (Cons, Norfolk) of a Private Members’ Bill on 19 December.

“It’s fair to conclude that the last two months have been significant and I see a defining change on the horizon.”

Former chief set to head College of Policing

A former chief constable has been appointed as the new chief executive of the College of Policing.

Mike Cunningham led Staffordshire Police from 2009 until 2014 when he became an inspector at Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary which also took on responsibility for the fire and rescue services this year.

Mr Cunningham says he is delighted with his new appointment.

“Over the last few years the college has established itself at the heart of the reform agenda for policing. In this next stage, the challenge is to move that on so that all those working across policing have a clear understanding of how the college connects and supports them to deliver a service to the public,” he said.

“Policing faces a future of increasing and changing demand. The college has a major contribution to make in supporting the service, helping leaders at all levels work through the challenges and developing a workforce that is well equipped to do the job asked of them.”

In congratulating Mr Cunningham, national Federation chairman Steve White said he was joining the college at a critical time for policing and urged him to improve its links with police officers.

“We would encourage him to now lead the way in working closely with the Federation to help bridge the gap between the college and those on the front-line of policing, demonstrating its relevance to rank and file officers who are confused about its link to their day to day work,” Steve explained.

“Beyond their remit to provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge to protect the public they have a leading role in protecting officers themselves. Our own evidence shows that welfare and resilience in policing has never needed such serious attention. Police leaders are sitting up to this fact and through its professional committee, and following the recent award of £7.5 million for a new national welfare service, the college must take the reins in effectively addressing the issues that exist.

“The Federation looks forward to discussing those challenges and others with Mr Cunningham.”
Extra funding is needed if the additional training needs identified in a report on death in custody are to be addressed, according to the Federation’s national custody lead.

Andy Ward was speaking after the report put forward 110 recommendations, with 39 relating to policing and the remainder aimed at the NHS and justice and regulatory systems.

“The Federation has been highlighting concerns about the lack of good quality, consistent training in the custody arena for years but it has fallen on deaf ears and the service appears to have made little headway,” says Andy.

“There are custody personnel who have had no refresher training for more than five years, custody suites are being shut because of a lack of resources and there is a rising toll on the mental health and sickness levels of those officers who work in that environment.

While we are glad that custody training needs appear to have been recognised, we are not confident that the necessary additional resources will be made available to pay for it or to ensure that we have the appropriate levels of custody personnel to ensure detainees’ safety.”

And, while cautiously welcoming the report, he added: “It makes many valid recommendations but stops short of detailing how they are to be achieved against a background of continued austerity and police officer numbers dropping by more than 21,000 since 2010.”

The Federation has pledged to work with all parties to try to ensure that the recommendations can be implemented to ensure the safety of detainees, police officers and communities but has expressed its concerns.

The Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody, chaired by Dame Elish Angiolini, makes recommendations across a wide range of issues including restraint techniques, healthcare provision and detainees with mental health issues.

"There are custody personnel who have had no refresher training for more than five years, custody suites are being shut because of a lack of resources and there is a rising toll on the mental health and sickness levels of those officers who work in that environment.

- 9 January
  Steve White, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW), welcomed Prime Minister Theresa May’s mental health reforms and called them ‘a step in the right direction’.

- 19 January
  Office for National Statistics Crime Figures show a rise in violent crime and the changing nature of demand.

- 26 January
  Jayne Willetts, PFEW’s lead on roads policing, opened the annual Roads Policing Conference and Exhibition by highlighting the dwindling number of police officers on our roads.

- 31 January
  National Federation survey showed members overwhelmingly supported the wider roll-out of Taser.

- 31 January
  A delegation of Federation representatives and officers attacked while on duty talked to MPs on the extent of assaults on police and the value of spit guards during a meeting at the House of Commons.

- 6 February
  The Federation launched its national Protect the Protectors campaign calling for better protection – in terms of legislation and equipment such as spit guards - for police officers.

- 7 February
  Holly Lynch, Labour MP for Halifax, championed Protect the Protectors in Parliament. She put forward a Ten-Minute Rule Bill on assaults on emergency services staff winning cross party support. The bill calls for assaults against emergency service workers – “a constable, firefighter, doctor, paramedic or nurse” – to become a specific offence.
22 February
Cressida Dick is appointed as the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner.

2 March
The Home Office announced its approval of the new X2 model of Taser for police in the UK.

8 March
The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, presented his Spring Budget to Parliament in which he outlined the need to better protect public services.

15 March
The Federation’s national welfare survey revealed that stress levels across the police service are twice as high as levels seen across other working sectors.

22 March
The Metropolitan Police confirmed that PC Keith Palmer died after confronting a man in the grounds of Westminster Palace, shortly after 2.30pm. “No words can capture how members of the policing family will feel after today’s horrific events,” Steve White, chair of PFEW, said.

29 March
The British Transport Police pledges support to the Federation’s Protect the Protectors campaign.

3 April
Pre-charge bail will be capped at 28 days in the biggest overhaul of bail arrangements in the entire history of PACE.

10 April
Officers from Dyfed Powys Police attend PC Keith Palmer’s funeral in London.

12 April
A call has been made for a “long over-due” full review into policing. National Federation chair Steve White said: “For more than a decade, we have been demanding a holistic and independent review of policing in order to properly determine what the public want and expect of their police service.”

24 April
Speeding drivers now face harsher fines but the Federation remains concerned at falling numbers of traffic cops.

16 May
Chief Constable Anthony Bangham, lead on roads policing for the National Police Chiefs’ Council, pledged to conference he will work closely with the Police Federation to get better protection for trained police drivers.

9 June
Prime Minister Theresa May pledged that the new Government will work to keep the nation safe and secure, and mentions giving the police “the powers” they need to keep the country safe.

16 - 17 May
The annual Police Federation national conference was held in Birmingham for the first time with a new two-day format.

17 May
In his keynote speech, Federation national chair Steve White called on whoever forms the new Government to make policing a priority.

17 May
Home Secretary Amber Rudd addressed conference telling officers, “We owe you, the police, an incredible debt, for the courage and bravery you exhibit in the line of duty. For your willingness to put yourself in harm’s way, day after day, in order to protect the rest of us.”

13 June
Nick Hurd is appointed new police and fire minister.

20 June
Met Commissioner Cressida Dick announces 1,867 officers will be trained to use Taser, bringing the total number trained and carrying Taser to over 6,400 officers. A call is made to have the uplift replicated nationwide.

22 May
Twenty-two people were killed and 116 injured in a suicide bombing at Manchester Arena.

13 July
Dyfed Powys PC Marc Wood wins the regional bravery award for Wales after rescuing a boy from the River Wye. He joins other nominees for the Police Bravery Awards at a Downing Street reception hosted by Prime Minister Theresa May and Home Secretary Amber Rudd ahead of the evening award ceremony at The Dorchester Hotel.

Continued on Page 17
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Continued from Page 15

**28 July**  
The Care of Police Survivors (COPS) annual memorial service honouring fallen officers and remembering their families was held at the national arboretum in Staffordshire.

**31 July**  
A survey of members’ views on the routine arming of police officers was launched with 123,000 officers across England and Wales receiving a form via email.

**7 August**  
New national guidance on appearance standards for police officers and police staff was officially put in place.

**30 August**  
The national pay and morale survey revealed officers’ morale has plummeted due to rising stress and falling pay.

**30 August**  
Steve White, national chair of the Police Federation, announced he plans to resign at the end of the year.

**12 September**  
It is announced officers across England and Wales will receive a two per cent pay rise. It emerges that it is a one per cent pay rise with the extra one per cent being a one-off non-pensionable “bonus” that forces would have to fund themselves.

**12 September**  
Custody is seen as a punishment posting, the national custody seminar is told.

**16 September**  
The terror threat level is increased to its highest level following the Parsons Green Tube bomb.

**22 September**  
An open letter demanding answers from Government on the “derisory” pay award for police officers has been published by those representing rank and file officers from across the country.

**24 September**  
The National Police Memorial Day is held at St David’s Hall in Cardiff to remember fallen officers. Dyfed Powys Police Federation is represented by Mark Bleasdale, chairman, and Paul Laughlin, secretary.

**25 September**  
The Home Office announced a review of the law and guidance surrounding police pursuits and response driving.

**4 October**  
A national template for a new nine-point stress plan which aims to help forces better prioritise officer wellbeing has been launched by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

**12 October**  
Detectives’ morale has hit rock bottom, a survey carried out by the Police Federation’s National Detectives’ Forum revealed.

**23 October**  
The assaults bill, presented by Labour MP Chris Bryant, wins unanimous support in Parliament.

**26 October**  
New misconduct guidance is issued by the College of Policing.

**7 November**  
Former Staffordshire Chief Constable Mike Cunningham, who has since worked at HMIC, is appointed as the new CEO of the College of Policing.

**9 November**  
The Force receives a “requires improvement” rating in the latest PEEL review on police efficiency published by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

**16 November**  
The assaults bill clears the Committee Stage in Parliament.

**21 November**  
Calum Macleod is elected as national Federation chair.

**21 November**  
The Federation supports the Daily Mail and The Sun newspapers which have called for officers involved in the London Bridge terror attack to be awarded the George Cross.

Metropolitan PC Charlie Guenigault and British Transport Police (BTP) PC Wayne Marques both suffered horrific injuries when, unarmed, they confronted three terrorists wearing fake suicide vests, who had murdered eight and injured 48 people during the London Bridge attack on 3 June.

**30 November**  
New Police Federation regulations are laid in Parliament and are expected to become law on 31 December.

**6 December**  
Tributes flood in for Thames Valley PC James Dixon, an on-duty police motorcyclist who died in a road accident in Berkshire the previous day. A 91-year-old woman passenger in a car involved in the collision also died.
Going through a divorce?

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Ben Evans
Senior Associate in Family Law at Slater and Gordon

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January is a time for making resolutions. It might be deciding it’s time to kick a bad habit or get fit. But sometimes the beginning of a new year will be a point when you consider a change that will have a big impact on your life. What if that change is ending your marriage? Here are a few things to think about if divorce is on your mind in the new year.

Is it really over?
If you decide to go ahead with a divorce, you need to be sure that there is definitely no chance that the marriage can be saved. The Christmas period can be both a joyful and difficult time of year. It may have been challenging for you if you have been on duty and this has caused a strain between you and your spouse. A tough Christmas does not have to spell the end of a marriage and you and your spouse may be able to work through this together or with the support of family and friends or counselling services such as Relate.

When can I get a divorce?
Some people assume that they will not be able to divorce immediately as there has been no particular reason for the breakdown of the marriage. Some people think that there has to have been an affair or particular incident to be able to start a divorce straight away, but this isn’t the case.

If you have felt unsupported by your spouse or feel that the two of you no longer make the effort to spend time together around your shifts etc, you could rely on this to prove to a court that the marriage is over.

When should I make the decision?
If you have decided that you do want to go ahead with a divorce, we generally advise that you speak to a family lawyer sooner rather than later to ensure you are as informed as possible. Often the first question we are asked is how an officer can try to protect their police pension and taking action at the earliest opportunity can be very important.

A spouse has a claim to an ex-partner’s income, capital and pensions on divorce and these will be based on their financial situation at the time of divorce and not necessarily at the time of separation. Your spouse is likely to be successful in claiming against the value of your pension at the time of divorce rather than its value at the time of your separation, i.e. a claim to more of your pension. For example, we acted for an officer who separated from his wife but waited 13 years before dealing with his finances on separation. His wife might have achieved a 14 per cent share of his pension 13 years ago but had an argument for an increased share of some 32 per cent 13 years later.

What about the children?
If you have children, you will need to try to agree an arrangement for them with your spouse if you separate. The court is concerned with arrangements which are in a child’s welfare. Parents are encouraged to agree a routine of care which is in a child’s best interests.

You may find it difficult to reach an agreement with your spouse or perhaps your complicated shift pattern is making it difficult to set out a regular routine. If this is the case, then you should seek legal advice and a referral to mediation can be considered.

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

Concern over misconduct guidance

New guidance on misconduct hearings published by the College of Policing is too loaded towards the dismissal of officers, according to the Federation’s national conduct lead.

But Phill Matthews has pledged to work with the college and other stakeholders to ensure a fair, proportionate and transparent disciplinary system is developed.

The new guidance is said to be aimed at making misconduct hearings more fair and consistent for officers.

As part of assessing the seriousness of cases, misconduct panels will consider, among other things, the officer’s record, culpability for the misconduct, the harm caused, aggravating factors and mitigation. The guidance does not, however, over-ride the discretion of those presiding and it cannot prescribe the outcome.

Phill explained: “We were consulted on the draft guidance and made a number of representations on a range of issues. Broadly, in its present format, we found the guidance too loaded towards the presumption of the dismissal of officers. We believe decisions should be focused more around the merits of each individual case as a fairer approach.

“We are still keen to work with the college and other stakeholders to ensure that the police disciplinary system is fair, proportionate and transparent, but it has to be so both for the public, but also for police officers.”
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