Government’s contempt for police officers must end, says new chair
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Secretary’s foreword

By Roger Webb

Back in June, when we published the last edition of this publication, I think it’s fair to say we all felt a little hopeful that we had, at last, got a Home Secretary who wanted to build bridges with the police service.

In his first conference speech, we were all expecting Sajid Javid to hide behind the fact that he was only a few weeks into his new post and give us vague answers. Instead, it was refreshing to hear him admit it was time to reset the relationship between the Government and the police and also encouraging when he said he was listening and he got it.

But, just a couple of months later, we found that, however welcome those sentiments were, they were just words.

Once again, the Government failed to back the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), which put forward a three per cent uplift, and instead awarded us a derisory two per cent pay rise.

According to the Press, Mr Javid did speak up on our behalf and wanted the Government to honour the PRRB finding. Sadly, even if that is to be believed, our already fragile relationship with the Home Office has been further strained.

The Police Federation of England and Wales, in a joint submission with the Superintendents’ Association, had submitted detailed evidence of why it felt officers deserved a 3.4 per cent pay rise. Clearly, the PRRB pretty much agreed with us.

We have played fair; it is what we do. But MPs, who let's face it are keen enough to accept the findings of their own pay review body, have not really entered into the spirit of the process, have they?

Our new national chair, John Apter, has been very forthright with his views and, in a statement issued shortly after his election, said it was time for the police service to bite back so that the disdain and contempt the Government had shown officers stopped.

We will have to wait to see how this all unfolds. But, at the very least, we need an assurance that the Government will abide by PRRB’s recommendations next year.

Police officers hold a unique place in society, putting their lives on the line to protect their communities. I don’t think any officer signs up to get rich. There are plenty of other professions we could have pursued if we were only focussed on making money.

However, just as we are committed to fairness when serving the public, we do expect to be treated fairly ourselves. We want fair pay, we want fair conditions of service and we want fair treatment.

Currently, it feels like we are not being treated fairly in any respect. We are being asked to do more and more. So-called traditional crimes are on the up, as are new and emerging offences such as human trafficking and cyber crime. Nationally, we have seen our numbers plummet and we have seen demand increase as we try to pick up the pieces when other public and voluntary services fail.

So, come on Mr Javid, if you are listening and you do get it, please put your words into actions.

Remembering fallen officers

This year’s National Police Memorial Day service is being held in Belfast.

Dyfed Powys Police Federation will be represented by Mark Bleasdale, chair, who will attend the annual service which takes place on Sunday 30 September at the city’s Waterfront Hall.

The event is in its 15th year and honours police officers who have given their lives in the line of duty.

Roger says: “National Police Memorial Day is one of the key events in the policing year. It serves to show the unique place police officers hold in society and risks they face day in, day out. It important for those in the police service to stand shoulder to shoulder with the family members of officers who have paid the ultimate price when serving their communities.”

National Police Memorial Day (NPMD) was founded by Sergeant Joe Holness in 2001 to ensure fallen officers are honoured and that their unique, proud legacy is forever treasured.

He said: “The British police service is renowned worldwide and its unique and priceless reputation is entirely a reflection of the professionalism of the men and women who proudly perform the role. Sadly, each year police officers give their lives in order that we may all live in peace. They place the safety of others above that of their own - they do so with pride and because they are the best.”

Each year the event is held in a different country of the United Kingdom and is attended by chief constables, police and crime commissioners and the Home Secretary.

HRH The Prince of Wales is patron of the NPMD charity and has attended the service in the past.
A two per cent pay rise was awarded to police officers across England and Wales from 1 September.

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) had sought a 3.4 per cent rise and the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB), the independent organisation set up to consider the views of all parties, had recommended a three per cent rise.

But the Government once again chose to ignore the PRRB view, a move that was met with disappointment by the Federation.

Roger Webb, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, said: “The Federation put together a detailed package of evidence which explained why it felt a 3.4 per cent rise was reasonable and realistic but, as is often the case, it was not listened to by the Government.

“We appreciate that any pay rise has to be affordable and proportionate but in recent years police officers, and all public sector workers, have seen their wages fall in real terms and for many day-to-day living is becoming incredibly tough.

“Yet again the Government has chosen to ignore the representations of the Federation and of the review body and, in my view, a pay rise which is not reflective of what is deserved and just.”

The pay increase consists of:

- A two per cent pay increase for all police officer ranks
- A two per cent increase to the London Weighting payment
- A two per cent increase to the Dog Handlers’ Allowance.

Announcing the increase, the Government said it had strived to strike a balance between overall affordability to forces and fairness to the taxpayer while recognising the importance of continuing to reduce debt as a share of the economy while investing in vital public services.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said: “Our police officers do an incredible job in the face of complex crime and rising demand, and I’m grateful for their continued dedication to keeping us safe. This award represents the highest consolidated pay award since 2010.

“I’ll continue to fight on behalf of police to ensure they have the resources they need to do their jobs effectively.”

The award comes after the Government removed a one per cent cap on increases to public sector pay in 2017. The PRRB had recommended that the one per cent non-consolidated award received in 2017-18 be consolidated, and that a further two per cent consolidated award be given to all police officers.

The PFEW has called the pay rise ‘derisory’ with national vice-chair Ché Donald claiming it was an insult to officers, with some getting just £2.50 a week extra when it comes into effect.

The National Police Chiefs’ Council has also expressed concern that the Government has ignored the PRRB recommendations.

Its lead for reward and recognition, Chief Constable Francis Habgood, said: “The Police Remuneration Review Body is independent and assesses evidence from a range of perspectives when reaching their decision. We are concerned that not following its recommendations undermines confidence in the process.”

‘Govt paying lip service’

In real terms, police officer pay has now decreased by around 18 per cent since 2009/10, according to the Police Federation of England and Wales.

National vice-chair Ché Donald said the Home Secretary’s announcement on pay ‘flies in the face of a lot of hot air spouted by the Home Office and Government’ over the past few months.

“Less than two weeks ago the Home Secretary was proudly pleased to hand bravery awards to two officers who took on the London Bridge terrorists. At our conference in May, he said he would stick up for officers and fight for a better deal. We warned then he was on probation,” said Ché.

“But now this is looking more and more like paying lip service, when in reality this pay award is an insult to those who serve day in, day out. It means that an officer at the start of their service is going to be a miserly £2.50 better off each week.

“Now wonder a growing number of officers are leaving the service. In the past two years there has been an increase of more than 30 per cent of voluntary resignations – nearly 2,000 last year alone - we are literally haemorraging officers and much of it has to do with the fact they simply can’t afford to stay in the job.”

Ché criticised the Government for ignoring the recommendations of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for the second year running.

“The Government must honour the PRRB process which is based on evidence – we asked for 3.4 per cent so that officers could be paid fairly for the dangerous job they do after years of austerity. The PRRB recommended a total of three per cent,” he said.

“We have played ball – we submit evidence to the pay review body, yet Government dismisses its recommendation.”
Dyfed Powys Police Federation

‘Time for police to bite back’

The time has come for police officers to bite back after years of being kicked by a Government that has its head firmly buried in the sand when it comes to the impact of cuts, according to the new national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales.

And John Apter has vowed to take a tough stance when negotiating on members’ behalf after becoming the first national chair to be chosen through an election in which members across the country could all take part.

“For far too long police officers have been taken advantage of. Pay and conditions, ‘reform’ of the service, huge budget cuts, and outrageous slurs and media soundbites... The Government has been kicking us for years. There comes a point where we must bite back, that time has come,” he said.

And he added: “Whilst we must have a relationship with the Home Office, chief officers and the College of Policing, I do not want to be their friend. I will hold them to account to make sure they act in my members’ best interests. That begins tomorrow when I start my role as national chair.

“I have a long list of priorities. At the top of the list will always be pay and conditions. Following the contemptible and disgraceful actions of the Government this year over our pay award – and let’s be frank, over the past seven or eight years – we have some significant decisions to make. The disdain and contempt shown to police officers in England and Wales must end.”

John, who has been chair of Hampshire Police Federation since 2010, says he is ‘honoured and humbled’ to have been elected to lead the Federation and proud to be a police officer, saying officers are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job.

“Other areas I want to focus on include ‘reform’ of the service, huge budget cuts, and contempt shown to police officers in recent years. There comes a point where we must take a stand and make a difference. We have been shouting about the consequences of cuts to policing for years and have been labelled scaremongers for doing so. We need to be more passionate, persuasive and proactive, and we must take our message to the public who, in the main, support policing.”

Two candidates put themselves forward for the role of chair with John standing against Phill Matthews, the national conduct lead.

Chair’s election statement

John Apter says that being passionate about fairness was one of the reasons he joined Hampshire Constabulary in December 1992.

It was also behind his decision to become a Fed rep; he wanted to ensure colleagues were treated fairly and received the respect they deserved.

Before taking on the Hampshire Federation chair’s role, he was a uniformed front-line officer working in response, roads policing and on a specialist team investigating road deaths. He also spent some time as a family liaison officer, a role he found incredibly rewarding.

In an election statement put out to members, he explains: “In my time as local chair, I have ensured the voice of our officers has been at the heart of everything we do. I worked tirelessly to create the Seven-Point Plan to ensure officers and staff assaulted at work are treated as victims and given the support they deserve. The plan has been adopted by almost every force across England and Wales and some forces overseas. The Metropolitan Police have adopted the plan and called it Operation Hampshire.

“The work I started has been adopted by the Police Federation of England and Wales, becoming the Protect the Protectors campaign, of which I am incredibly proud.”

He continues: “I will never shy away from fighting for what is right for those I represent. I have successfully campaigned for the full roll-out of Taser and spit guards for all officers across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

“As national chair, I will give you your voice back. Employment rights for police officers is a contentious issue but over the years I have seen the gradual erosion of Police Regulations. I want an open and honest debate about what you want, your views matter and will be taken forward. I will work closely with local Federations and will be a very visible national chair, working alongside colleagues, across England and Wales, to make sure your voice is heard.

“The national Federation needs to stop focusing on itself and focus on what is important, which is YOU, the member. I do not just talk about issues, I have been active in my force and have a proven track record of putting my money where my mouth is, fighting for our officers to make sure the reality of policing is made public. I am passionate about policing and the welfare of our officers.”

He tells officers: “This is the first time members have been able to vote for their national chair. This is your opportunity to make a difference. The PFEW must respond to what the members need. It is time for change. Please vote for me and help me to make that change happen.”

Whilst we must have a relationship with the Home Office, chief officers and the College of Policing, I do not want to be their friend. I will hold them to account to make sure they act in my members’ best interests.
Officers urged to claim over-time and other entitlements

Members are being reminded to make sure they claim over-time pay and their other entitlements.

The reminder comes as the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) continues to express its frustration at the two per cent pay rise awarded by the Government despite the pay review body’s recommendation of a three per cent uplift.

The new pay scales came into effect on 1 September.

John Apter, the Federation’s national chair, said: “It’s no wonder officers are feeling undervalued and unappreciated when the Government ignores the recommendation of its own independent pay review body.

“We have played ball submitting extensive evidence to the pay review body with it being disregarded with no justification yet from the Government.

“Police pay has declined relative to inflation by 18 per cent since 2009/10 which makes no sense when you take into account the increasing demand on the service. Officer numbers have also plummeted to an all-time low since 1996.

“What other shocking statistics need to be released before the Government realises the implications of its actions?”

From 1 September 2018 officers in England and Wales will see an insulting £2.50 increase in their pay a week*, according to the Federation.

In terms of the amount that officers receive in their pockets, the two per cent will be a mere 0.85 per cent – leaving officers financially worse off when inflation is accounted for**.

The Federation recommended a three per cent increase so that officers could be paid fairly for the dangerous job they do after years of austerity. The Independent Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) recommended a total of three per cent.

The latest findings from the PFEW Leavers’ Survey show that nearly 2,000 officers voluntarily quit the service over the past 12 months – an increase of 31 per cent over the past four years. A staggering 69.4 per cent felt the police service had failed in its obligation to provide pay increases to maintain their standard of living and 64.4 per cent said they would never consider re-joining the police service after they had left.

John continued: “Sadly, this comes as no surprise to me – where is the incentive to do such an incredibly dangerous job? Because officers certainly don’t do it for the money.

“Now more than ever it is imperative pay is adequate and fair acknowledging the incredibly demanding job they do. It is unacceptable to see officers struggling to make ends meet whilst working all the hours under the sun to keep the public safe because there simply aren’t enough officers to meet the increasing demand.

“Results from our 2018 pay and morale survey show that a staggering 44.8 per cent of officers worry about the state of their personal finances either day or almost every day and more than one in nine said they never or almost never have enough money to cover all of their essentials. This is up from 11 per cent from 2017.

“Police regulations and terms and conditions are all too often cherry picked. Over the coming months I will be campaigning for officers’ rights and educating members on the importance of claiming what they are entitled to from leave to rest days, over-time allowance and taking adequate rest breaks.

“Our officers go above and beyond the call of duty to protect the public and it is imperative they claim their basic entitlements, especially when their hard work and indisputable dedication is not being recognised in their pay packets.

“We will continue to fight for members’ best interests using the processes we have in place, but we will also regularly review the merits of direct involvement in those forums if those routes are not achieving what we want.

“Police officers’ goodwill has been taken for granted for too long and there are consequences to this and the Government need to wake up and realise it is not acceptable,” John concluded.

* This figure is based on the starting salary of a police constable which amounts to an increase of approximately £10 a month.

** The 0.85 per cent figure is derived from the fact that of last year’s two per cent rise, only one per cent was consolidated. That one per cent has now been removed by the Government for this year’s pay award, so taking into account pension contributions, then the actual uplift is worth approximately 0.85 per cent to constables.

Have your say in national welfare survey

Members are being urged to take part in the Police Federation’s national survey on officer welfare, demand and capacity.

This is the second time the Federation has carried out the survey in a bid to find out more about the challenges officers are facing.

Members will be sent an email with a link to the survey.

“This survey is a really important piece of work,” explains Roger Webb, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, “We all know that officers are under pressure and that their welfare is suffering as they struggle to meet increased demand with reduced resources.

“But, we need hard evidence to back up our arguments when we put forward our concerns to the Government, to the Force and to other stakeholders.

“I appreciate that officers are already really stretched but I would urge as many members as possible to try to find the time to fill out this survey. The more officers to respond the more weight it gives to the results.”

The 2016 survey findings painted a damming picture of the service, revealing:

- Widespread stress and poorer psychological wellbeing than the general population, with 80 per cent of respondents experiencing feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other mental health and wellbeing difficulties within the previous 12 months;
- Capacity to meet demand being viewed as insufficient;
- Four out of five officers indicating that officer numbers in their team or unit were insufficient to manage demand and do the job properly.

The shocking results prompted the Federation to host two workshops looking for solutions to address the demand and capacity imbalance.

The development of four recommendations received sign off from key stakeholders from the National Police Chiefs’ Council, College of Policing and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. The recommendations were also agreed with police minister Nick Hurd.

Ché Donald, vice-chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: "Two years ago officers told us very clearly that the police service was struggling, with a severe imbalance around meeting increasing demands - with decreased capacity to meet them through reduced officer numbers. We have taken steps nationally to highlight and address this, but there is still much more work to do.

"This 2018 survey is a significant piece of work. It will give an updated picture, identifying where we need to take action and what, if anything, has changed since the last survey. But, we need members to take the time to complete the study if we are to effect positive change."
There has been a small rise in the number of officers within the Force in the past 12 months, despite a decrease nationally.

Latest figures released by the National Office of Statistics show that in the 12 months to March 2018 Dyfed Powys gained 26 officers (2.3 per cent) – bringing the total to 1,186, or 170 officers per 100,000 of the population the Force serves.

There are 812 male officers and 374 female officers with 1,145 available for duty and not on long-term absence. Broken down into rank, there are 877 constables and 207 sergeants, 44 of which are female.

Roger Webb, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, said: “While we should be thankful for the very small increase in officer numbers, the bottom line is, it simply isn’t enough.

“More and more people are requiring our services on a daily basis not only for the more traditional crimes such as burglary, theft and assault, but for a host of other reasons as well.

“Officers spend huge amounts of time safeguarding people and dealing with mental health issues. They spend hours upon hours looking for missing people and writing safeguarding referrals to try to protect those who are most vulnerable.

“Until something significant is done to get officer numbers higher, things are going to continue in a downward spiral – crime will rise and officers will burn out.”

Nationally, as of 31 March 2018, figures show there were 122,404 police officers, a decrease of 0.6 per cent, or 738 people than in the previous 12 months.

The figures were released at the same time statistics revealed crime across England and Wales has risen by 13 per cent in the past year.

National Federation vice-chair Ché Donald said: “These new figures are proof, as if we even needed it, that policing in the UK is on the critical list. And yet, thanks to Government funding cuts, we now have the lowest number of police officers since 1996. The figures show we have lost more than 21,300 officers since 2010 – that’s a drop of 15 per cent and the numbers keep going down every year. It’s like Groundhog Day.”

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Members want more access to Taser

The majority of Dyfed Powys Police Federation members who took part in a national survey on routine arming have said they want access to Taser at all times when on duty.

The results of the survey, carried out by the Police Federation of England and Wales, revealed that 76 per cent of respondents from the Force said they wanted to have access to Taser. It also revealed that currently 30 per cent of those officers, for whom it is applicable to their role, had such access to the device – eight per cent higher than the national average.

Dyfed Powys Police Federation secretary Roger Webb explains: “These figures speak for themselves and show what a valuable resource Taser is. We already have nearly a third of members in this survey saying they carry the device and with so many more officers wanting to carry it, it clearly shows officers feel they need it to keep themselves, and the public they serve safe.

“The figures also revealed that only seven per cent of officers, for whom it is applicable to their roles have access to double crewing. With more and more single crewing being utilised, it is hardly surprising that officers want to protect themselves in the best way possible. Violent crime, knife crime and assaults on officers are rising, leaving officers feeling vulnerable. It is important for them to be given the equipment they need to maintain their own safety and that of members of the public.”

The survey revealed:

- 76 per cent of Dyfed Powys Police Federation members want access to Taser at all times when on duty
- 7 per cent – for whom it is applicable to their role – currently have access to double-crewing, compared to 11 per cent nationally
- 59 per cent wanted access to double-crewing while on duty
- 75 per cent – for whom it is applicable to their role – have access to body-worn video
- 87 per cent wanted access to body-worn video
- 65 per cent either not very or not at all satisfied that armed support would be available if they required it
- 30 per cent were in favour of officers receiving appropriate training and be routinely armed on duty
- 55 per cent said they would be prepared to be routinely armed - the same as the national average
- 53 per cent said they had felt their life was in serious danger at least once in the last two years as a result of a threat by a member of the public while on duty.

The vice chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, Ché Donald, said: “It’s no surprise to us that the majority of officers who took part in this survey said they want access to Taser at all times.

“It is imperative that officers are afforded the best possible training and equipment in order to keep themselves safe and Taser is an extremely effective means of dealing with the many dangerous situations that officers often face and is a less lethal option than more conventional firearms.

“In 80 per cent of cases where Taser is drawn, it is not fired as the deterrent is enough, which helps protect communities as well as protecting officers from assaults.

While there are many forces supportive of wider roll-out, owing to financial constraints they are unable to. The protection of both our officers and the public should never be compromised because forces can’t afford to keep them safe.”

The Federation is calling for improved access to equipment for officers through its Protect the Protectors campaign.

A total of 577 (51 per cent) Dyfed Powys Police Federation members responded to the survey which was carried out between 31 July and 1 September 2017. They were asked:

- Satisfaction with their current access to armed support
- Views on routine arming
- Views on other protective measures and equipment
- The number of times respondents had felt their life had been threatened at work in the last two years.

In 80 per cent of cases where Taser is drawn, it is not fired as the deterrent is enough, which helps protect communities as well as protecting officers from assaults.
Slight improvement in morale

Morale has improved within the Force, according to the results of a survey carried out by the Police Federation of England and Wales.

Results from Dyfed Powys show that 49.4 per cent of respondents have low personal morale, compared to 55 per cent in the same survey last year. And 77.1 per cent of respondents said there was low force morale, compared with 84 per cent last year.

Roger Webb, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, said while improved morale was encouraging there was still some way to go.

“While we need to see further improvements if we are to reach a level of morale which I think everyone would be comfortable with, it is good to see things are moving in the right direction,” he explained.

“The Government has stripped the police service to the bone so it is hardly surprising that officers feel undervalued, underpaid and over worked. And of course, this will affect their personal, and the Force, morale.

“Despite all that has been thrown at them officers remain committed, dedicated and determined to do the best possible job in constantly challenging circumstances and they should be praised for all that they do.”

The results of this year’s pay and morale survey also show:

- 82.3 per cent of Dyfed Powys respondents said they do not feel they are paid fairly for the stresses and strains of the job
- 66.8 per cent said they are dissatisfied with their overall remuneration – including basic pay and allowances
- 63.3 per cent said they would not recommend joining the police to others, though only 8.7 per cent said they intended to leave the service in the next two years
- 43.6 per cent reported worrying about the state of their personal finances every day or almost every day

A total of 241 Dyfed Powys Federation members took part in the survey. This equates to 21 per cent officers.

The three main reasons Dyfed Powys officers gave for low morale were how the police as a whole are treated (75.3 per cent), pay and benefits, including pension (69.7 per cent) and work-life balance (64.8 per cent).

### Force findings

#### Satisfaction with pay

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<td>Dissatisfied with pension</td>
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#### Cost of living

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<td>Worried about the state of their finances every day or almost every day</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt they were worse off financially than five years ago</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never or almost never having enough to cover monthly essentials</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Morale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dyfed Powys percentage</th>
<th>National percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low personal morale</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Force morale</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Reasons for low morale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Negative effects on morale Dyfed Powys percentage</th>
<th>Negative effects on morale National percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay and benefits, including pension</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day to day job role</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload and responsibilities</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life balance</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for development and promotion</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the police as a whole are treated</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment by senior managers</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of change within the police</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ew legislation giving better protection from assaults to police and other emergency service workers has sailed through its third reading in the House of Lords.

The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Bill, put forward by the Labour MP for Rhondda, now just needs Royal Assent before it is enacted and becomes law.

Roger Webb, secretary of Dyfed Powys Police Federation, explained: "It is great news that this new bill is now so close to becoming a reality and I really hope it goes all the way and gives our officers the protection they deserve.

"Police officers, and other emergency service workers, are constantly subjected to assaults and abuse while they are doing their job and it should never be acceptable for this to happen.

"Sadly, over recent years, workers have become used to being assaulted and it is a sad state of affairs when it is seen as 'part of the job', which is never should be.

"These workers are the very people who are trying to help society and one day, the person who is assaulting them may desperately need their help.

"No-one should be assaulted simply for doing their job and tougher sentences are needed to punish those who assault the police to make it clear that it will not be tolerated and act as a deterrent to others.'"

"Police officers, and other emergency service workers, are constantly subjected to assaults and abuse while they are doing their job and it should never be acceptable for this to happen."

The bill follows the Police Federation of England and Wales' Protect the Protectors campaign.

It proposes to make assault or sexual assault against emergency service workers an aggravating factor punishable by up to 12 months in prison. It also gives police added protection from sexual assault.

However, the Federation does not feel the sentences it lays down are tough enough. It had been lobbying for an assault on an emergency worker to carry a maximum sentence of 24 months in prison.

This proposal was not accepted, with the Government maintaining its original proposal of a 12-month maximum sentence for this new offence. As it stands, however, magistrates are unable to impose this increased tariff as their sentencing powers are limited to six months. To change that, the Government would need to enact a piece of legislation which has been sitting dormant on the statute books since 2003.

If that does not happen, the 12-month maximum would only be available for those sentenced at a crown court.

Calum Macleod, Federation national chair at the time of the bill's passage through the Lords, said: "Now more than ever it is essential that magistrates take the issue of assaults more seriously and don't let the side down. All too often I speak with officers whose attackers have faced little or no consequences for their actions. This is totally unacceptable – the justice system needs to support those who risk their lives to enforce the law.

"Magistrates do not have 12 months sentencing powers, therefore six months is the maximum we can expect at the moment. We need to end the practice of offenders being under-charged and prosecuted for less serious offences.

"We will continue our campaign to better Protect the Protectors and pursue tougher sentences, improved welfare and support for those who risk so much every day.'"

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IOPC supports better protection for response drivers

The Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) has said it supports better legal protection for police response drivers.

The IOPC issued a statement saying it is ‘right’ that police response drivers training and skills are properly recognised in law.

It comes after Tim Rogers the Federation’s national driver training and pursuits lead, spearheaded a campaign to ensure that police drivers, driving in accordance with their training and experience, do not find themselves facing court or misconduct proceedings when responding to emergencies or pursuing suspects.

Now, the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC) has said it is only ‘right’ that police response drivers training and skills are properly recognised in law.

Tim has been campaigning for the change in law for years and is confident the issue will be resolved now Parliament has reconvened for the autumn. He believes that later this year we will either see the bill outlining the legislative change require put forward by Norfolk MP Sir Henry Bellingham making its way to law or the Government laying down its own plans to change the law.

Under existing laws, an officer can face prosecution whenever they are engaged in an emergency response drive or a pursuit. In some cases, they have been held liable for accidents and injuries caused by fleeing criminals.

This is because the law holds police to the same standard as a regular motorist, with no regard to their high level of training or experience. The Home Office is proposing to address this by establishing a new driving standard – a careful and competent police driver.

Tim explains: “It is positive that the IOPC supports the intent that police officers who are appropriately trained and authorised should be able to pursue suspects or respond to emergencies without fear of prosecution or disciplinary action. It is unacceptable to have officers trained to drive in a way that exposes them to prosecution merely for doing the job the public expect of them.”

“This is an issue we have been campaigning on now for several years and, although it is a positive step that the Government has finally agreed that a legislation change is required, it must now act quickly to prevent more officers suffering unnecessary and often mendacious prosecutions. We look forward to working with Parliament to shape what that legislation looks like.

“It is crucial we protect the people who protect us and give them the confidence to be able to do their jobs and keep the public safe.”

IOPC deputy director general Ian Todd has now said: “Police drivers need to pursue suspects and respond quickly to emergency calls as part of their duty – and that’s what the public want them to do. So, it’s right that their training and skills are properly recognised in law.”

The IOPC said it agrees with proposals to change the driving standard to that of a ‘careful and competent police driver’ and would like the legislation to specifically state that this is a police driver ‘trained to the relevant appropriate standard’. This separate standard will allow investigators and the Crown Prosecution Service to take account of a driver’s higher level of training and skill. It will also reinforce the importance of police drivers receiving high quality training.

The police watchdog also supports a review of emergency services exemptions from certain aspects of road safety law, with the caveat that it should seek to avoid ‘unintended consequences’ for public safety and should not undermine the ability of the IOPC to hold the police to account.

It is crucial we protect the people who protect us and give them the confidence to be able to do their jobs and keep the public safe.
Officers join families for COPS remembrance service

Police officers from across the UK joined the families of those who have lost loved ones in the police service to attend an annual service of remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas.

The service, organised by the charity Care of Police Survivors (COPS) was opened by Jan Berry, former Federation national chair and COPS chair of trustees, and included moving inputs from four people with personal experience of having lost a family member who was a police officer.

Margaret Logan talked about losing her husband, Reserve Constable Clifford Evans of the former Royal Ulster Constabulary, who died in 1976; Caroline Speakman recounted her struggles to come to terms with the loss of her brother, PC Jonathan Speakman of Cheshire Police who died in 2005 while rescuing children from a rip-tide on an Australian beach and John Fordham gave an uplifting speech about moving on after the death of his father, DC John Fordham of the Met who died in 1985.

There was praise for the way in which COPS had helped them stay connected to the police family and offered them and their families support.

During the service, this year’s roll of honour was read by COPS national president Denis Gunn with the congregation observing a minute’s silence for:

PC Steve Jenkins
Gwent Police – 6 October 2017

PC John Alcock
Grampian Police – 7 October 2017

PC James Dixon
Thames Valley Police – 5 December 2017

PC David Fields
South Yorkshire Police – 25 December 2017

Senior Forensic Practitioner Jacob Maselino

After the service and despite heavy rain, families and other guests made their way to The Beat, the avenue of trees dedicated to each force, where roses and wreaths were laid in memory of fallen officers.

Before the service, officers who took part in the Police Unity Tour (PUT), which involved more than 350 riders cycling the length and breadth of the UK, rode into the arboretum. Each cyclist wore a wristband dedicated to the memory of an officer who lost their life on duty, as well as raising funds for COPS.

The Blue Knights, a motorcycle club for police officers, also paid tribute to the fallen by riding into arboretum as part of the Blue Knights Law Ride.

The event was the conclusion of the charity’s annual Survivor Weekend, a two-day event bringing together the families of officers who have died on duty, ‘survivors’, to form friendships and lasting bonds to help them through the good and bad times. The weekend included an outing to a theme park for younger survivors, as well as relaxation sessions and a craft workshop.

COPS chief executive Tim Buckley, who closed the memorial service, said: “This is the biggest event of our year and is a chance for us to get as many survivors together as possible to support each other in rebuilding their lives.

“We are grateful to all our supporters across the wide police family and beyond. We would like to thank all our fundraisers, in particular the Police Unity Tour and all their sponsors, who have raised a substantial amount of money over the years for COPS.”

This year marks the 15th anniversary of COPS, and since its foundation the charity has helped hundreds of families devastated by the loss of a loved one in the police service.

COPS is a peer support charity, enabling survivors from around the UK to support other survivors in practical ways. In addition to Survivor Weekend, the charity arranges numerous local and national events to offer opportunities for survivors to build a strong support network.

Working with its partner organisations Winston’s Wish and Red Arc, COPS also provides specialist counselling support to bereaved families.

If you would like to be kept informed about the work of COPS, you can sign up for a free quarterly newsletter by visiting http://ukcops.org/newsletter-consent.php

Caroline Speakman talks about the loss of her brother.

Photo courtesy of COPS
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Government sets officer wellbeing goal

The Government has published a framework for improving police wellbeing in England and Wales, which it expects to deliver tangible results by 2021.

The document, Common goal for police wellbeing 2021, was released by the police minister Nick Hurd.

He said: “There is a huge amount of energy, common cause and support for making sure we are doing all we can to support the wellbeing of our police officers and staff – who play such a vital role in keeping our country safe. We need to be really clear on where we want to be in the future, and begin the important work to get there.”

The goal reinforces the statutory responsibility of chief constables to manage the welfare of their officers and staff, sees three key priorities to achieve by 2021:

- Ensuring every member of the police service feels confident that their welfare and wellbeing is actively supported by their police force throughout their career
- Making sure a culture supporting this is embedded in every force; and
- Ensuring individuals have access to appropriate support when they need it, including physical and mental health, as well as the broader concept of wellbeing.

This announcement comes on the back of research into injury on duty published by the Police Dependants’ Trust (PDT) and studies by other police organisations on the welfare and wellbeing needs of the service.

PDT chair Tim Jackson QPM explained: “Wellbeing in policing is vitally important, and it’s something that has been ignored for far too long. It’s right that the PDT has been taking this agenda forward, and it’s good to see this commitment on what is a fundamental issue.”

He added: “Policing is a people-focused organisation, and its staff are not tools to be used and then discarded when they’re broken. I am pleased to see the goal announced, and will await the substance behind it with great interest. In the meantime, the PDT will continue to provide the confidential programme of practical, emotional, and financial support which those who have suffered harm as a result of their policing role require every single day.”

The charity’s chief executive, Gill Scott-Moore, sounded a note of cautious optimism, saying: “Since publishing the Injury on Duty research in 2016, and the report into post-traumatic stress in frontline policing last year, we have been consistently calling for welfare that works for everyone who suffers harm as a result of their policing role.

“We are pleased that the minister is heeding those calls, and we look forward to hearing about how forces will address identified weaknesses in wellbeing at a local level.”

The announcement also outlines the future use of PEEL assessments and Force Management Statements under HMICFRS to hold forces to account for wellbeing standards, something the PDT has been keen to see as a means to end the postcode lottery of welfare support across forces in England and Wales.

About the Police Dependants’ Trust

The Police Dependants’ Trust is a national police charity dedicated to supporting those who suffer harm as a result of their police role.

- Formed more than 50 years ago following the Braybrook Street massacre, which saw three police officers brutally murdered in broad daylight, the PDT provides a confidential programme of practical, emotional and financial support to those in need, for life.
- Operating across all 48 police forces covering the UK, and doing so without any Government funding, it cares for more than 10,000 people every year.

Headline statistics from the PDT’s Injury on Duty research:

- 81 per cent experienced at least one physical/mental health issue due to their policing work
- 16 per cent have taken a week or more off work in the past five years due to PTSD
- The two most common reasons for taking a week or more off work were anxiety (43 per cent) and depression (37 per cent).
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