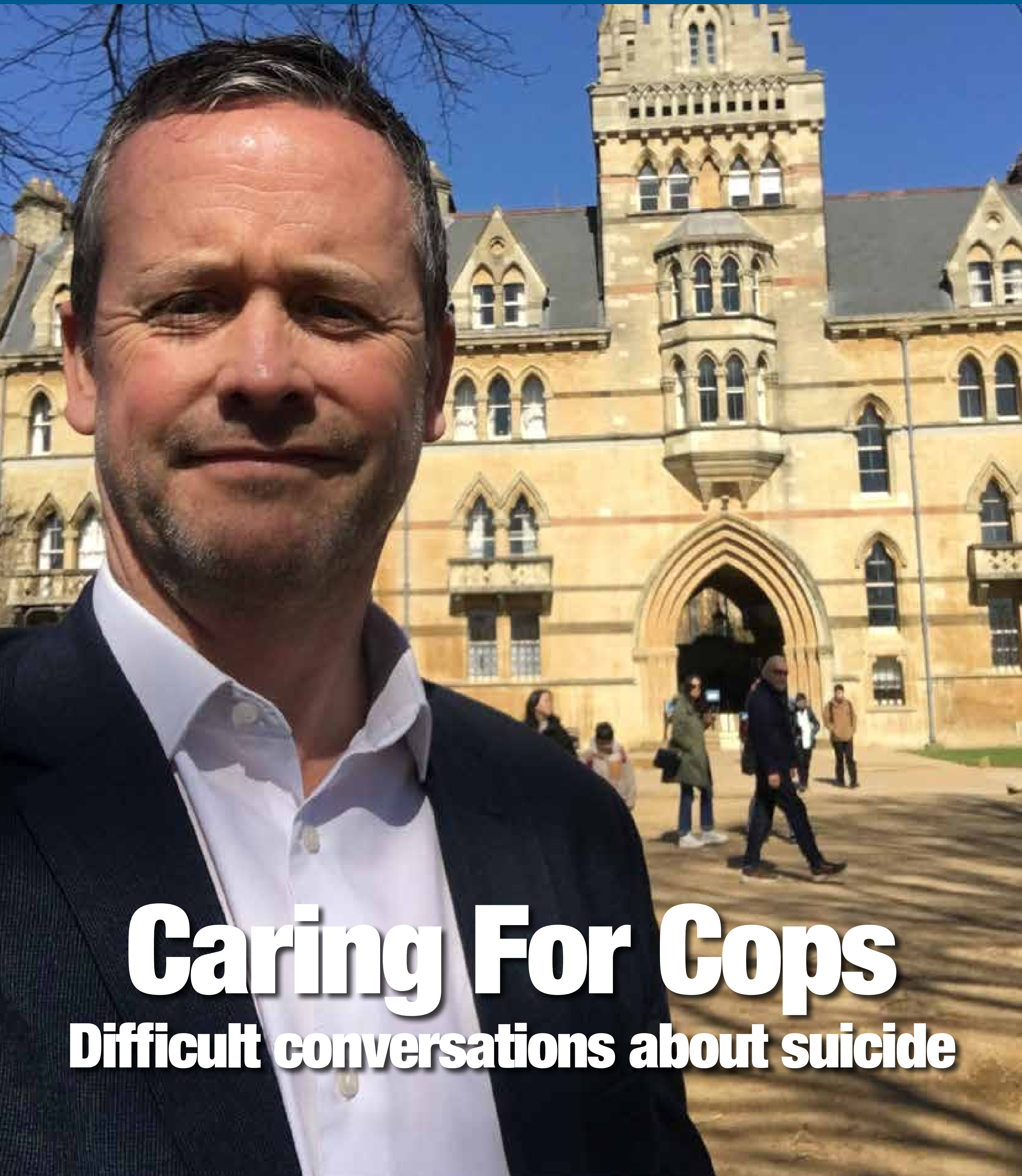
# ThamesTalk

The magazine of Thames Valley Police Federation SUMMER 2024



# Caring For Cops

## Difficult conversations about suicide

# No5 Chambers

ThamesTalk

The magazine of Thames Valley Police Federation


**Published by:**

Thames Valley Police Federation
76 Wellington St
Thame
Oxfordshire
OX9 3BN

Telephone: 01865 542385

Email: enquiries@tv.polfed.org

Website: www.tvpfed.org/

Follow us on X: @TVPFed

Join us on Facebook: Thames Valley Police Federation

ThamesTalk is produced by Martis Media (www.martismedia.co.uk) on behalf of Thames Valley Police Federation.

Advertising: Wendy Thomas

Email wendy@martismedia.co.uk

Editor: Erena Laird

Email erena@martismedia.co.uk



# Contents


## Regulars



## Features

# The Retention Problem

Craig O'Leary
Chair
Thames Valley
Police Federation

Welcome to this edition of *Thames Talk*, released on the day that we come together to celebrate the very best of our Thames Valley Police colleagues at our sixth annual Federation Bravery Awards.

We are celebrating some truly heroic acts this year and I look forward to celebrating with my brave colleagues and their loved ones at this year's event. Congratulations to them all.

You will be able to read much more about them in our next edition and also on our social media accounts.

## Retention Crisis

Poor pay means that policing is sleepwalking into a retention crisis.

Recently, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley gave evidence to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) and called for a police pay rise at or above the rate of inflation.

Well said.

Sir Mark rightly pointed out that police officers had seen a 16% real-terms pay cut over the past 12 years and that the high cost of living was placing an even bigger strain on officers, as well as hampering recruitment.

Frankly, it's old news that police pay has been eroded. Where was Sir Mark over the past 12 years, when the Federation has been there all along, stating this very point on behalf of its members?

While we're grateful he's speaking out, it's all just a bit late. In terms of the consequences of our pay falling so far behind where it was, policing has for many years been sleepwalking into a retention crisis that nobody has got to grips with.

'Boris's bobbies' and the much heralded 20,000 officer uplift were just a sticking plaster over the problem, and many may argue that the dropping of recruitment standards to meet targets in order for forces to avoid further financial penalties will have a major impact on forces for years to come – through Reg 13, UPP and of course conduct issues.

Home Secretary James Cleverly recently wrote a letter to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) to say it was vital that pay review bodies consider the "Government's affordability position".

Having seen the Home Secretary's letter to the 'independent' PRRB Chair urging restraint on police pay this year, I fear that we will be very underwhelmed when our pay award is announced in the summer.

## Money Struggles

Sadly it is no secret that many Thames Valley Police officers are struggling with the cost of living.

A survey of more than 6,000 serving and retired police officers and support staff, conducted by Metfriendly, found that for 56% of respondents the cost-of-living crisis had affected their wellbeing.

The Police Family Finance Report also revealed that 55% of respondents felt their financial situation had declined over the past 12 months, despite adjustments to pay levels made in 2023.

One in five (21%) said they are skipping meals, and 9% said they or family members they live with have used a food bank in the past 12 months.

Just under half (49%) of respondents considered stopping pension payments due to financial pressures in the past year, including 8% of respondents who have already halted pension payments to get by.

We are in the South East region, which is historically one of the most expensive places to live in the country. A young officer in our force has little or no chance of being able to afford their own property, unless through the various schemes that may or not be available in the region.

I often talk to our new recruits about the need to take responsibility for their finances when they join, so that they can make savings in all aspects of their lives. Our Federation partners are also there to help them through these challenges.

It's important to understand that there is help out there, including the force's Benevolent Fund. Officers can access financial counselling and support services, and speak to their welfare officers or the Federation for assistance.

## A Fond Farewell

This is my last 'view from the Chair' as your chairman. I step down in May to go back into policing in Aylesbury after promotion.

It's been the privilege of my policing career to serve our members as Chair of TVP Federation since 2017.

I reflect on my time with great memories and some sorrow. The loss of several colleagues during my tenure will stay with me forever.

> **"Policing has for many years been sleepwalking into a retention crisis that nobody has got to grips with"**

But it's also a time for celebration and I look at the work I did as part of the Protect the Protectors campaign, which resulted in the increase in the sentencing for Assaults on Emergency Workers, also the introduction of our physio clinic to help members get back to work quicker when suffering with injuries.

And of course the creation of our own Bravery Awards, where we celebrate our TVP heroes.

I leave our Federation in a better place than I found it and it's now time for some fresh input and ideas from a new Chair.

Policing is a tough job, and it is imperative that we have a strong Federation that is there for our members when they need it. I am confident that it will get even stronger in years to come.

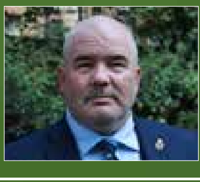
So, it's a fond farewell from me to you all and I thank all members for their support over the years. I also want to thank our Federation's commercial partners for their continued support of our membership. Take care and stay safe.


POLICE


Sepura
mode

# Unseen Consequences

Mark McIntyre
Secretary
Thames Valley
Police Federation



As police officers, we need to be mindful of what we do today and how it affects what happens tomorrow. What will happen to the next generation of colleagues who undertake this fantastic career?

As I look towards my impending retirement from policing in August this year, I inevitably reflect over the 31 years of my policing career.

One thing that has been very apparent to me is how the behaviour and actions of the police officers who served prior to me affected my role and my terms of conditions. And equally how that means that today's behaviours, by today's cops, myself included, will affect the terms and conditions of service for tomorrow's police officers.

If we think back to the 1960s and 1970s, the behaviour of police officers then – without laying the blame or pointing fingers – brought about the need for the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which came into force in 1984.

Frankly, it was needed because of how our predecessors dealt with issues. Think *Life on Mars*.

**Familiar Story**

The 1960s and 1970s and the work of the Police Federation at the time also brought about the Edmund-Davies review into policing, which led to some significant pay awards due to the conditions that were affecting police officers at the time.

Poor pay had led to PCs' children being on free school meals, too many second jobs, a corruption risk and an inability to fill posts. Police pay increased by 30% for new joiners and 45% for mid-service officers.

Police officers were leaving in droves, and the necessity to provide a policing response to the country required the Government of the day to take some fairly drastic action. Once again a result of police behaviours.

**Sweeping Changes**

We look through to the 1990s and the 2000s and the behaviours of some police officers across the country brought about the requirement for body-worn video, the launch of the Independent Police Complaints Commission and then the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

The Macpherson Report, The Secret Policeman and such like directed the narrative around policing. Residential training schools were closed.

The Sheehy Inquiry into policing, back in the early 1990s, came into effect that decade, and some of the changes that brought – which still affect us today – were because of the behaviours of police officers.

Off the back of that, we've had many changes to police pay. One of the bigger ones affecting officers was losing paid rest day working at double time. Today's cops will only ever know that paid rest day working is done at time and a half.

That came around because police officers were working outside of Police Regulations and were choosing to work for time and a half because they got the nod ahead of police officers who were sticking to regulations at double time.

Forces were choosing, understandably, to pay less money to people to get the same work. So the Government's attitude was, "If people are willing to work for time and a half, why are we paying you double time? Change the rules".

So we, as today's custodians of the Custodian helmet, need to be really cognisant of how our decisions and behaviours today affect those going forward.

**Long-Term Impact**

In the late 1970s, the Edmund-Davies report improved police pay and encouraged all people to look into a career in policing.

Today we still suffer the affects of the 2011/12 Winsor Review and the impacts that has had on policing.

We're still working our way through all of those as a collective, but are the national concerns about police officer recruitment and retention a result of this attack on our pay and conditions?

We only have to look to recent years, and without going into the detail of it, the impact that certain individuals' behaviour is having on the conduct regulations and the vetting process. The upshot of that of course is yet to be discovered.

Whether the way these issues are dealt with is fair can only be judged in the future. But those wanting to push through changes to conduct or vetting – whether they be senior leaders or politicians or both – will use these abhorrent actions by such a small minority as a justification.

**'Back In My Day'**

My plea, as I look forward to my retirement, is that we as police officers and the holders of the great Office of Constable remember both honour that bestows upon us and the heavy price that we and our future colleagues will pay if we get this wrong.

> "Practices will change adversely in the future – perhaps unfairly – because of what we as a collective are doing today"

Practices will change adversely in the future – perhaps unfairly – because of what we as a collective are doing today.

Generations of police officers have, over the years, always said "back in my day things were better; back in my day…", particularly as retirement approaches.

Not too long ago, I was challenged by a young-in-service colleague I was working with on shift when I said something similar. They said: "This is my today and just because things were 'better' for you when you joined, you were me 20-odd years ago."

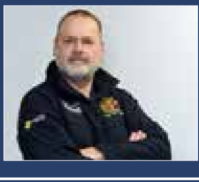
Do you know what? They were absolutely right. As police officers, we need to be mindful of what we do today and how it affects what happens tomorrow.

But today's your day, enjoy it, work hard, have a great career. It is a brilliant job. Thames Valley Police Federation will be there to support you. Make the most of it.

# NPHS

# An Unexpected Benefit

Gary Bishop
Equality Lead
Thames Valley
Police Federation



Parental leave is a benefit available to all police officers, but few make use of it. PFEW Equality Lead Ian Saunders has investigated how taking this unpaid benefit could be useful for people with children under 18.

Here, Ian has set out various scenarios in which unpaid parental leave could be a more practical option in certain circumstances than switching to flexible working.

This benefit is well worth considering if you have children under 18, and you find yourself with extra childcare responsibilities – whatever the reason.

This explanatory article about parental leave is an edited version of a blog by Ian that was originally published on the PFEW website.

**What Is Parental Leave?**

Parental leave is available to all parents with children under 18. You are entitled to 18 weeks of unpaid leave for each child, and this can be used at any time. Both parents get the same entitlement – it is 18 weeks each, not 18 weeks between you. The benefit is also available for adopted children from the date of adoption.

Parental leave can be used so you can "be absent from work, for the purpose of caring for that child". It could be you are going through a separation and have unexpected caring responsibilities at short notice. Your may initially think about reducing your hours at work and requesting a flexible working plan.

But if you have a change of circumstances, reducing your hours by taking this type of leave may be a better short- to medium-term option.

Many forces are bad at sorting out flexible working in a timely manner, whereas parental leave can be arranged within a few weeks.

Parental leave is also reckonable for annual leave entitlement. So, if you were part time, your holiday entitlement would be pro-rated down. But with parental leave, your annual leave for that year remains unchanged.

For example, you could take six weeks' parental leave over the summer holidays and use your normal full annual leave entitlement for the other school holidays. Coping with the fact you have no pay for six weeks in the summer might take some planning (whereas if you were part time this would be spread out across the year), but in return you get the certainty of the time off when you want it and can take off longer periods at once.

If your domestic circumstances change quickly and you are struggling to cope, taking every set of nights off as parental leave for the next year, or taking off some of the school holidays, is likely to be a quicker and simpler solution than trying to negotiate a flexible working plan with the force. A year on, the world might look very different and you will have had time to put in place long-term solutions.

The other additional benefit for police officers parental leave is very flexible. For police officers, there is no limit on the amount you can take in a year, and you can take it in days rather than weeks.

**Guaranteed Leave**

Parental leave is an "entitlement" the chief constable "shall" grant you as long as you give 21 days' notice of when you intend to take it.

Unlike your annual leave, which you make an application to take, for parental leave you give notice to the force of when you are taking it.

Often a manager receiving a notification of parental leave may want to review or decline it based on operational need or force policies restricting the numbers of people who can take annual leave at once. The reality is you are not asking, but telling, when you will be away on unpaid leave. Staffing issues are the force's concern, not yours. If you come across such issues your Fed Rep can help you.

All types of leave in the police service (except maternity leave) are subject to exigencies of duty, but this is a very high threshold for the force to meet. The force cannot deny a notification of intent to take parental leave, but can push it back until the exigency has passed.

**"Unlike your annual leave, which you make an application to take, for parental leave you give notice to the force of when you are taking it"**

**Juggling Act**

This benefit may not sound fair to those without children, but it is not meant to be. The Government legislated to give extra rights to people with children on purpose.

This does place a burden on employers: that too is deliberate, and it is for the force to manage it.

Family leave such as this is designed to give people the right to unpaid time off so they can juggle work and home life, and stay employed.

# A Difficult Conversation

Suicide prevention is a priority for Thames Valley Police, both for members of the public and those within its ranks – and the Police Federation is proud to be involved in this important work.

The force lead for suicide prevention is Detective Chief Inspector Ryan James, who works in counterterrorism policing and as a hostage and crisis negotiator.

He spoke to *Thames Talk* about the many initiatives he was working on to attempt to reduce the numbers of suicides in Thames Valley.

Ryan said: "We're right at the front end of people in crisis. That might be at the top of a multi-storey car park or a bridge, often in the middle of the night, trying to save lives.

"Quite often those people are at the final chapter of poor mental health. I've been involved in that world for nearly 10 years and I'm hugely passionate about its importance.

"Within Thames Valley Police, I run an operational group that brings together suicide prevention champions from across the force. Not only do we look externally, we look internally to death within our own ranks.

"Very sadly, a young officer recently took their own life. We're working with the Police Federation's Health and Safety Lead Aileen O'Connor to bring about awareness and learning from police officers taking their own lives.

"We're asking big questions and I'm really pleased that the Federation is involved with this."


### A Growing Issue

From 2001 to 2020, 344 police officers took their own lives nationally, according to figures from the 2023 PFEW conference.

Paul Williams, PFEW Wellbeing Lead, said at the conference: "That is 17.2 a year, more than one a month, and the number is rising. This issue is serious and needs real time and real investigation."

The Police Federation has written to MPs about police officer suicides and attempted suicides and the urgent need for their recognition as work-related accidents, as per the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR).

Police officers often face severe stress and trauma as part of their daily duties, which can have a profound impact on their mental health.

The rates of suicide and attempted suicide in the police service has been steadily rising, underscoring the urgency of addressing this crisis within the policing community.

The inclusion of police officer suicides and attempted suicides as work-related accidents under RIDDOR is a vital step towards acknowledging and addressing the mental and emotional toll that officers endure in the line of duty.

Such recognition would not only provide a more accurate assessment of the scale of this issue but would also ensure the necessary support and resources are allocated to address the mental health challenges.

Moreover, the change in reporting will push forces to fully investigate each in line with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance.

### Building A Support Network

Ryan added that in Thames Valley, the Men's Forum is designed to provide a support network for male officers, who have been shown to be more likely to want to take their own lives.

He said: "I'm a member of the Thames Valley Police Men's Forum and I've done some webinars with them.

"We have four pillars: male allyship, mental health, physical health and suicide prevention, because we know that 70% of all suicides are males."

Thames Valley Police is also involved in Real Time Suicide Surveillance (RTSS), where every force provides information about how many suicides occur, and the person's age, sex, occupation and circumstances of death, as well as whether they were known to services beforehand.

Ryan added: "There's a whole wealth of information that we can share with partners. That helps put the foundations into place for what public health can do in order to prevent suicide."

This work ties into the Government's five-year cross-sector strategy for suicide prevention, which focuses on what more can be done by Government, the NHS, wider local public services, businesses and community groups to help stop people getting to a point where they are contemplating ending their own life.

Ryan is also a police representative for the Suicide Prevention and Intervention Network (SPIN) in Thames Valley – a forum comprised of representatives from councils, prisons, education, charities, NHS Trusts, and people with lived experience of suicide and attempted suicide. It promotes the message that suicide is everybody's business.

He explained: "We've also got a target hardening project, where we have identified repeat locations of suicides and we're partnering with councils and highways to target those locations and businesses.

"So more safety barriers are put up, Samaritans put up extra signage and businesses provide training for security guards at multi-storey car parks. We've already had great stories about security guards saving people's lives."

He also praised Thames Valley Police's dedicated suicide bereavement co-ordinator, who supports families and signposts them to bereavement support services such as Amparo. Ryan said: "Our bereavement support co-ordinator is really amazing, well-trained and experienced in these matters. This service is so important because the loss of another human life is right at the heart of policing."

**"This service is so important because the loss of another human life is right at the heart of policing"**

Anyone affected by this post can call the Samaritans on 116 123 or visit **samaritans.org**.

# Police Charity Provides

A Thames Valley Police detective whose police officer husband was severely brain damaged in an on-duty incident has thanked Police Children's Fund for helping her support their six-year-old triplets.

DC Claire Midwinter has been a single parent to Ella, Aria and Tamara for the past four-and-a-half years since her husband Matt, also a Thames Valley Police officer, was involved in a collision while on duty. He now needs round-the-clock care and can no longer live in the family home. The couple's triplets were only 17 months old at the time of the incident.

Claire said: "We were both paying into our Federation, and the Welfare and Benevolent Fund, but until this happened I had no idea that there was such a thing as the Police Children's Fund.

"It was only six months afterwards, when everything had calmed down a bit, that the Family Liaison Officer introduced me to Police Children's Fund – it was then called The Gurney Fund – and said 'this might be something that could support you'.

"I had three very small children who were in need of doing all the things that children want to do. That's quite expensive, especially with them having their birthdays at the same time."

**A New Start**

Money from the Police Children's Fund has since enabled Claire to get the girls into sport, which has boosted their confidence and helped them make new friends.

Claire said: "Due to the fallout of what's happened, the girls need that little bit of extra support and they're very reluctant to leave my side. I was very keen to get them into sports, but it had to be in an environment where I could stay with them.

"They did gymnastics for a while, and the

# Vital Support Network

Police Children's Fund allowed that to happen. It was an out-of-school activity that gave them a bit of independence, but I could also stay in the family room upstairs, so they felt safe.

"Then a couple of years ago we used the money to get the girls into football. That is now a huge part of our life – we practically live at the football club. The girls do training, they're about to start friendly matches, and Matt can also be involved in that. The confidence the girls have gained from meeting other children, being part of a club, and being part of a team is amazing.

"Matt's case management team is actually sponsoring our team, so it's incorporated him massively within the girls' extracurricular activity, their passion and their hobby."

**Times Of Need**

"On a day-to-day basis Police Children's Fund has improved the life not only of the girls, but also myself, and of Matt as well," Claire said.

"It allowed us to look at different activities that maybe we wouldn't have been able to justify because of the cost.

"I want to give massive thanks to Police Children's Fund for allowing us the opportunities to explore what the girls might like to do."

Recently, Police Children's Fund funded a session for the girls to be taught to ride their bikes without stabilisers, as Claire was unable to teach all three of them at the same time.

She said: "It allowed me to take them to a training session where they get taught how to ride, and I'm now looking at being able to get them new bikes to support that.

"The Police Children's Fund helps families in their absolute time of need. One of the hardest points of their life can be made so much easier by its support."


# Hearings Must Be Fair

**Pete Foy**

**Complaints & Performance Lead**

**Thames Valley Police Federation**

After the public confidence crisis in relation to certain Metropolitan Police officers, police chiefs and the Home Office are looking to alter the way police conduct matters are dealt with.

Sadly, we have to be honest that there are a few rotten apples that are spoiling the barrel right now. But despite what some media reports have said, the issue is nowhere near what is being stated. I really do believe that.

I've been working for 32 years now in policing and I have seen very little corruption, if any. I have seen nothing on the scale – and never worked with anyone on the scale, that I know of – of Wayne Couzens and David Carrick.

As a result of the horrific and unspeakable things they did, and the ruinous spotlight they put onto policing, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley and his Chief Constable counterparts have had what in my view is a bit of a knee-jerk reaction.

It has now caused a change in misconduct regulations and proceedings, which we were not ready for and the Home Office has not prepared correctly for.

We are about to start a new regime in April that is going to cost a lot more but it is not broken and it does not need to be fixed.

The procedural system with Legally Qualified Chairs as heads of these misconduct panels is transparent and fair.

Today's officers should not be paying the price for senior officers in other places not playing their part in identifying and sacking Carrick, Couzens and people of their ilk earlier.

**"We will make mistakes; we will make errors. Where those mistakes and errors are genuine then they need to be treated as such"**

### Genuine Learning

I also think everybody needs to be aware of public perception and how important that is. I think it is incumbent on all of us to give a good level of service.

We do want policies and procedures and senior officers who protect us. We will make mistakes; we will make errors. Where those mistakes and errors are genuine then they need to be treated as such.

There is learning, there is training, there are various ways that this can be dealt with, rather than throwing somebody under the bus as a sacrificial lamb because a force has failed. I would hope that would not happen in Thames Valley.

We have body-worn video to protect us and the public so everybody is clear what has happened in situations.

The police need to have as much confidence, I feel, in the public as the public have in the police, for everybody to get the best service.

But, I think in Thames Valley we give an excellent service to the public. I think the background noise that we get from the other forces and the poor media reflection on us is not indicative of the officers in Thames Valley at all.

I would like Thames Valley Police officers to keep doing the great job they are doing, working hard like they do. They should think about what they are saying and doing when interacting with colleagues and the public.

If they have any worries about anything at all then their Police Federation is only a phone call away and we are totally happy to help them at any time they need it.

# Police Mortgages




TWENTY PENCE

**22%** of respondents said they wanted to resign within the next two years. Reasons given for wanting to leave included low morale (85%), and mental health and wellbeing (73%)

**86%** do not feel there are enough officers to meet the demands of their team or unit

**92%** say they are not fairly paid given the stresses and strains of their job

**18%** 'never' or 'almost never' have enough money to cover all their essentials

# Officers Plan To Quit

More than one in five police officers are planning on quitting the police service, with 78% highlighting poor Government treatment as a contributing factor.

Stark findings from the Police Federation of England and Wales' latest Pay and Morale Survey revealed 22% of respondents said they wanted to resign within the next two years or as soon as possible.

More than 9,000 officers resigned in the year ending March 2023. That is the highest number of leavers in a financial year since comparable records began.

Low morale (85%), and mental health and wellbeing (73%) were also significant factors tied to wanting to resign. More than half (58%) of respondents said their morale is 'low' or 'very low', while 87% felt morale within their force is currently 'low' or 'very low'.

And 82% indicated they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other problems with their mental health and wellbeing over the past 12 months.

### Demoralised Workforce

Other findings from the survey highlighted the extent to which officers' morale is affected by their pay.

In the survey, 95% of respondents said how the police are treated by the Government had a negative impact on their morale. And 81% of respondents said their pay had a negative impact on their morale, 73% said they would not recommend joining the police to others, and 71% do not feel valued within the police.

The issue of pay is a key one within the service, with 92% saying they are not fairly paid given the stresses and strains of their job.

And 78% said they are 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their overall remuneration, while 18% reported 'never' or 'almost never' having enough money to cover all their essentials.

Officers are still feeling the pinch when it comes to boots on the ground, with 86% saying they do not feel there are enough officers to meet the demands of their team or unit.

In addition, 64% said their workload has been 'too high' or 'much too high' over the past 12 months, and 39% said their workload was too high and had an impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

### 'Devalued By Government'

As part of its ongoing fair pay campaign, the PFEW is insisting the Government take into account the restrictions and limitations put on police officers and the risks they face on duty, and for pay to compensate this.

PFEW National Chair Steve Hartshorn said: "The growing evidence reveals a sad and shameful state of affairs.

"My colleagues who protect the public around the clock, in an increasingly dangerous profession, are feeling devalued by the Government. It is unsurprising thousands are looking to resign."


**Q** **You've just been elected as Thames Valley Police Federation Reps, but tell us about your policing career so far.**

**A** **Rhys Miles (pictured left):** I've been with Thames Valley Police for 20 years. I'm currently Service Improvement Sergeant for South and Vale LPA. I started out with West Berkshire LPA, which is the area I grew up in. Straight after my probation, I started tutoring, and I carried on being a Tutor Constable when the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) was introduced. I was the first person in Thames Valley Police to get the A1 Assessor Award.

In 2010 I got posted to Oxfordshire on promotion, and then worked in custody. I've also worked at HQ on a body-worn video product and later on the directorate for Operation Uplift.

**Jamie Lawes (pictured right):** I was a Special Constable for two years before joining as a regular police officer, and I was then a response officer for four years in South Oxfordshire – in the Vale of White Horse. I've then spent the last six years on the priority crime team at Abingdon police station.

**Q** **When did you become a Federation Rep and why did you decide to do that?**

**A** **RM:** I was elected very recently, at the start of this year. So I'm brand spanking new and I'm looking forward to getting fully trained up.

I knew that it was going to be a very challenging time for policing as a whole, and also for the Federation, over the next few years. I wanted to be at the forefront of that, and make sure my colleagues got the appropriate representation and support, because it is going to be a tough time.

**JL:** I've gone through quite a lot in the job. I've got some personal experience of PTSD, issues with promotion and issues with the detective night turn rota. I'm a father of two young children, with a wife in the job, so trying to juggle that work/life balance was quite problematic. I felt that the police weren't getting listened to.

Because I've been here for quite a long time now, people would often come to me for some advice and guidance – and I'm not afraid to speak out when I don't agree with things.

So the opportunity came to apply and I just thought now's the time to support officers and to support those who deserve to be wearing the uniform, because I know we're under immense criticism for everything we do.

I'm here to support those officers who actually do a good job in the force and help them with any issue they may have when they're going through their career.

# The Newest Recruits

**Rhys Miles and Jamie Lawes are Thames Valley Police Federation's newest Reps. They talk about why they wanted to sign up to help their colleagues**


**"The Federation does its best for its members when people are involved with it"**

**Q What are your main goals in your role as a Federation Rep and what aspect of it are you most interested in?**

**A RM:** I think we need to liaise with the force to work with Federation members to try to make it a better place to work, and give people the support that they need. We need to work together; we don't want to be on opposing teams.

**JL:** I'm very new to it and I haven't actually really done quite a lot, but it's the behind the scenes things, seeing what kind of support is out there [that I have enjoyed]. The opportunities for learning I've got from it.

I'll be doing lots of courses around welfare, wellbeing – about policies and procedures. Just finding out things that I've heard of before but I've never been totally clued up on, so just trying to understand what we can do as a Federation to support officers.

**Q What would you say to new officers joining the force, or those who might be thinking of becoming a Rep?**

**A RM:** I would say the Federation is like an insurance policy. Touch wood, I've never had to access the Federation's help, but I know officers who have found that support invaluable.

The Federation does its best for its members when people are involved with it. If you're not invested in it, you're not going to get as much benefit. It's about getting involved and supporting your colleagues.

**JL:** Obviously we all join the police to help people, but you need to be able to help those who are helping people.

If you have that mindset where you want to support officers who are going though troubling times, if they're having issues with welfare, if they're going through issues with their mental health, then it's a completely rewarding job. You get to support people at the best of times, but also you get to help them through the worst of times.

**Q And finally, why do you think the role of Federation Rep is so important?**

**A RM:** They're the point of contact between the Federation, an organisation that's there to support police officers, and the force. They speak up for officers who sometimes don't have a voice.

**JL:** The Federation are the voice of the police officers.

They're there for officers who might not have the confidence to speak up, and we are here to listen to people's concerns, raise those concerns with officers of rank and other police forces, and be that voice of reason.

# Insurance Benefits

Thames Valley Police officers and staff are being encouraged to check that they are getting the most out of the Group Insurance Scheme.

One group of people who might be missing out are retired officers who return to the force as police staff members, according to Andy Fiddler, Thames Valley Police Federation Rep and Chair of the Trust for the Group Insurance Scheme.

Andy said: "Any person employed by Thames Valley Police, whether they are an officer or staff member, can join the scheme, as can their partners.

"We also cover retired officers and staff members up to the age of 75, although you can't join the retired scheme if you weren't already in the serving scheme.

"But what I really want to highlight is that if you retire from being a police officer and you come back to the force as police staff, then you will be able to move back into the serving police insurance scheme. That will give you more benefits for less money.

"For instance, the serving staff scheme gives you £110,000 of life cover, and costs £29.95 a month. Whereas in the retired scheme you only get £60,000 of life cover for £36.25 a month."

**Wide-Ranging Benefits**

New police recruits get membership of the Group Insurance Scheme free for the first 12 months, and new police staff members get three months free.

The standard premium is £29.95 a month, which includes all the benefits listed right. But people can also choose to top up their life cover and critical illness cover for an additional fee.

Andy said the scheme "tried to cater for everyone", and explained how it worked for partners of police officers or staff members.

## Scheme Highlights

**This Scheme, provided by Philip Williams and Company, includes the following cover:**

- **Life insurance**
- **Critical illness cover**
- **Accidental injury cover**
- **Serious assault benefit**
- **Emergency dental treatment**
- **Court award compensation cover**
- **Convalescent benefit**
- **Sick pay benefit**
- **Hospitalisation benefit**
- **Legal expenses cover – including ID theft protection**
- **Travel insurance**
- **Mobile phone cover**
- **European motor breakdown cover**
- **GP24**
- **Support 24 counselling**

**"We think the Group Insurance Scheme is beneficial for all our officers and staff in these hard times when people are looking for value for money"**


He said: "Partners are covered under travel, breakdown, mobile phone, legal, GP and counselling support. If the partner wishes to have their own life and critical illness cover, they can do that for an extra £6.85 a month.

"They can also top up their life and critical illness cover, but it can't go above the level of that of the main scheme member.

"There's also the option for police officers or staff members to join the 'core' scheme, which excludes the life insurance and critical illness cover, and costs £18 up to the age of 70, and then £23 a month for ages 70 to 74.

"It might suit people who have a medical condition that means they can't pass the medical underwriting, but they get the other insurance benefits such as worldwide travel, motor breakdown, legal expenses, and 24-hour access to a GP.

"There's also a scenario where the widow or widower of a main scheme member can still access the core insurance scheme after their partner dies, and the payments come out of the police pension."

Another benefit of being a member of the Trust is that they can apply to stay at the Trust's holiday lodge in Cornwall at a discounted rate.

Members can also apply for the physiotherapy service run out of the Federation office, which is jointly funded through the Federation and the Group Insurance Scheme.

Andy said: "If you want to find out more, you can see all the details of the cover on the website. Feel free to contact me as the Chair of Trustees, or your local Fed Rep. We think that the Group Insurance Scheme is beneficial for all our officers and staff in these hard times when people are really looking for value for money."


**For more information, visit tvpfed.org/benefits/group-insurance/group-insurance-core-scheme/**

# Thames Valley Police Group Insurance Trust

In partnership with Thames Valley Police Federation

AUXILIUM QUIA OMNIBUS

**The TVP Group Insurance Scheme is a Trust run by six trustees. The products are provided by Philip Williams & Co. The Scheme is available to Serving and Retired Police Officers and Police Staff, and Serving Special Constables.**
**The Scheme provides a variety of insurance covers for a single premium. The cover provided has been specifically tailored to meet the needs of those working in a policing environment. The deductions are taken by payroll from your monthly salary.**

**This Scheme provides exceptional value and benefits, and includes amongst other things, the cover listed below.**

**Life Insurance | Critical illness Cover | Accidental Injury Cover | Serious Assault Benefit | Emergency Dental Treatment**
**Court Award Compensation Cover | Convalescent Benefit | Sick Pay Benefit | Hospitalisation Benefit**
**Legal Expenses Cover – including ID Theft protection | Travel Insurance | Mobile Phone Cover | European Motor Breakdown Cover**
**GP24 – 24 hour access to GPs for you and your family | Support 24 – Counselling Service**

**Although this cover is for you as an individual, some elements of the cover extend to your partner and family, at no extra cost.**

**More information can be found on our website at www.tvpfed.org/group-insurance-scheme**

**For queries please contact 01865 542385 or email enquiries@tv.polfed.org**

Police Mutual

# Are you looking for a mortgage?

## FEE-FREE Mortgage Advice for the Police Family

Whether you're a first-time buyer or remortgaging, you can leave your mortgage search in the hands of the Fee-Free Mortgage Advice Service provided by Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited. They'll provide you with fee-free independent mortgage advice and recommend the right mortgage for you, based on your circumstances.

Important things you should know: PMGI Limited, trading as Police Mutual acts as an intermediary for the purposes of introducing its customers to Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited, part of Tenet. You will not receive advice or any recommendation from Police Mutual. Such services will be provided by Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited who will provide Police Mutual with information about the services you have received. Police Mutual will receive 24.8% of any lender procuration fee from Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited in connection with the provision of mortgage broking services.

**A mortgage is a loan secured against your home. Your property may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage or any other debt secured on it. You may have to pay an early repayment charge to your existing lender if you remortgage.**

### Expert guidance from start to finish.

The Mortgage Advice Service advisors are experienced at arranging mortgages for the Police, so you can be confident they'll recommend the right mortgage for you.

Take the hassle out of finding a mortgage.

**Call Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited on:**

**01543 221 214**

Lines are open: Mon-Fri 9.00am-5.00pm

or visit
policemutual.co.uk/mortgages

PMGI Limited, trading as Police Mutual is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Financial Services Register No. 114942. Registered in England & Wales No.1073408. Registered office: Brookfield Court, Selby Road, Leeds, LS25 1NB.

Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited is an Appointed Representative of TenetConnect Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority under reference FRN: 149826. Tenet Mortgage Solutions Limited is a company registered in England and Wales under company number: 09111571 and whose registered office is at 5 Lister Hill, Horsforth, Leeds, LS18 5AZ. For your security, all calls are recorded and may be monitored.

ADV M P1 0013- 03/24

# FAQs

## What is the difference between Long Notice and Short Notice leave?

The current Thames Valley Police Annual Leave Policy has two very different periods for booking leave. Long notice leave is defined as a period between four months and 15 months prior the desired leave period. Short notice leave is defined as leave booked with less than four months' notice.

- Long Notice – allows for abstraction rate of 20% of establishment not taking cognisance of any other abstraction; in other words only annual leave is used to calculate the rate
- Short Notice – allows for abstraction rate of 25% of actual resources taking into account all abstractions such as Court warnings, TOIL, sickness, training RDIL etc

## How early can I book my leave?

The current Thames Valley Police Annual Leave policy permits officers to book their leave up to 15 months prior to the first day of the desired leave period. We would encourage officers to book their leave as early as possible.

## What is an exigency?

The term 'exigencies of duty' should be interpreted as relating to situations where a pressing demand, need or requirement is perceived that is not reasonably avoidable and necessitates a change of roster. Such pressing demand, need or requirement should not have been reasonably foreseeable at the time the roster was published.

The following are examples which generally would be considered as 'exigencies of duty':

- Unforeseen public order requirements
- Court attendance
- Intelligence-led crime operations
- Essential training
- Short Notice unforeseen absences from critical duty cover (e.g. due to sickness above normal levels or compassionate leave)

Failing to plan for New Year's Eve doesn't create an exigency, but someone going sick and or changing intelligence around an event, known or otherwise, could be.

# Flint House
## Police Rehabilitation

Flint House offers a safe, relaxed environment for serving and retired officers. Everyone is treated with care and respect by our caring and experienced practitioners.

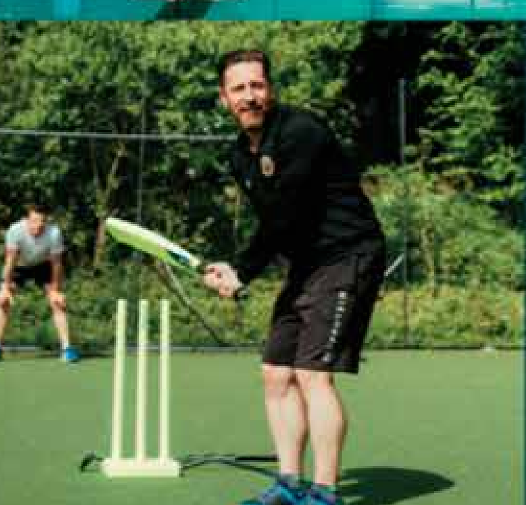
01491 874499 | flinthouse.co.uk

## PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

Intensive physiotherapy, exercise and gym work help fast-track you back to fitness from an injury sustained on or off-duty. We provide a treatment plan that is tailored to your individual needs.

## SWIMMING POOL

The jewel in the Flint House crown is our fully accessible 12.5m pool, with stunning views across the countryside and modern changing rooms. Our pool is open daily for therapy, rehabilitation and relaxation.



## MENTAL HEALTH

Our 5-day residential programme is facilitated by experienced mental health practitioners and registered nurses who have a sound understanding of the roles and challenges of the policing family.