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News & Comment

News reports by Syreeta Lund & Jade Azor

5 Editorial by Syreeta Lund
Officers’ interests enshrined as Fed’s core purpose

6 View from the chair: Steve White on the importance of a united front from all ranks
Fears that cuts in the number of officers could be linked to increase in assaults

7 Concerns over under-staffed custody suites

8 Local Focus: Mick Stubbs, chair of North Yorkshire Police Federation
Service must change to value people from all backgrounds, says College of Policing chair

9 Diversity must be at forefront of Federation

10 The Station Sergeant is... wagging the dog
Time for a ‘family friendly’ Federation revamp

11 Officers urgently need mental health training

12 Family of teenager to continue cancer fundraising

13 Dogberry: the lighter side of policing through the years

14-15 Picture special – policing take to the streets for the Tour de France

Features

16 Stepping over the line
Former police officer Nicholas Conn explains how his life spiralled out of control through cocaine use, and how he has turned it around to help addicts. Syreeta Lund writes

20 Community commitment
The Queen’s Birthday Honours highlights just some of those who have gone the extra mile for their communities. Syreeta Lund speaks to the inspiring West Yorkshire officer who has helped ‘glue’ his diverse community together

Regulars

13 Dogberry: the lighter side of policing through the years

24 Members’ benefits

26 View from the sidelines: Clive Chamberlain, former chair of Dorset Police Federation, takes a different look at life
Nick O’Time cartoon

27 Sudoku
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We need more diversity in the police service – surely no one can argue that a service which represents the community it polices is a good thing? Some may argue that it shouldn’t matter what colour or gender or shape you come in as long as you are working in the interests of protecting life and liberty. In a utopian world that would be spot-on, but in reality a big differential between the make-up of communities and those who police them can cause sticking points. It may be as simple as someone not feeling they can come forward and report a crime.

All that said, the Met Police’s announcement this month that it will only recruit people from the capital has caused some disquiet. If the aim is to increase diversity at constable level, why does the same criteria not extend to chief constables, who seem to be able to jet in from America or other countries and command the same respect as their UK contemporaries, based on their skills?

It’s also interesting that the debate around direct entry into the senior ranks bringing ‘more diversity’ into the service seems to have moved focus onto diversity in relation to ‘different types’ of leaders. So, it’s ok for those in the upper echelons to continue to reflect a selected part of the community, let’s face it, white, middle-class blokes, but it’s not ok for those at PC level? Perhaps a superior education gives you a better understanding of how to put yourself in the shoes of others?

On another note, this month marks the launch of the College of Policing’s Code of Ethics for officers, which may see as an extension of regulations that already exist, but focuses more emphasis on this area against a backdrop of issues around integrity in the service.

But I find myself, again, slightly confused by the fact that MPs don’t seem to have to adhere to the same standards. Some may recall the tough talking of Theresa May at the Federation’s annual conference on integrity issues in the service: “It is not enough to mouth platitudes about ‘a few bad apples’. The problem might lie with a minority of officers, but it is still a significant problem, and a problem that needs to be addressed.” One may say the same about the issues which are currently engulfing the Parliamentary establishment regarding a certain paedophile dossier, how that was dealt with and the basic moral standards to which we all should adhere. Perhaps a Basic Moral Code is in order. Order! Order!

The Police Federation will hold both officers and the public interest at the heart of the organisation after agreeing this will form part of its ‘core purpose’.

The Interim National Board (INB) and Interim National Council (INC) agreed the historic move last month at the inaugural meeting of the council which will be the first change to the organisation’s core purpose since the Police Federation was set up in 1919.

“It’s crucial we ensure we put members at the heart of what we do, we are transparent and that we act in the interests of both officers and the public.”

Steve White, chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, said: “This is another move forward as an organisation and demonstrates our commitment to reform. “It is crucial we ensure we are working to put members at the heart of what we do, we are transparent and that we act in the interests of both officers and the public.” A change in the revised core purpose to include the public interest element and provide a credible and trusted voice for officers was outlined in recommendation 1 of the Independent Review of the Police Federation, instigated by the organisation itself and carried out by the RSA.

The revised core purpose now reads:

― That PFEW agrees that in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities for the welfare and efficiency of its members the Federation at all levels will:
- ensure that its members are fully informed and that there is the highest degree of transparency in decision-making and use of resources;
- maintain exemplary standards of conduct, integrity and professionalism;
- act in the interests of the members and the public, seeking to build public confidence in the police service and accepting public accountability for its use of public money;
- work together within the Federation and in partnership with others in the policing world to achieve its goals.”
**News & Comment**

**View from the chair – Steve White, chair of the Police Federation**

**A united front**

Whether a constable, sergeant or inspector – we all matter, individually and collectively. The model of British policing is much revered throughout the world which is testimony to the dedication and commitment of everyone in the service working together for the greater good.

With such radical change and uncertainty that recent years have brought to bear, solidarity within the federated ranks has been awe-inspiring. After all, to most, the job is no longer what they signed up for.

I speak to officers, getting first-hand their concerns and frustrations, dispelling the myth that we are often detached from the realities of the job and the hardships the majority of our membership face. We are taking these realities forward – whether I am talking with the Home Secretary, the Shadow Home Secretary, Dame Anne Owers from the Independent Police Complaints Commission or other influential policing stakeholders, I am talking on behalf of all members.

I am talking about the overwhelming stress and pressure that officers have to endure as a result of the decimation of the service. I am talking about the detrimental effects to their health and morale. I am talking about the uncertainty of their future as their pay and pensions are eroded beyond all recognition.

In such trying times it is imperative that the federated ranks have the backing of an effective staff association. Our need to change was clear, and our intention regarding the way forward is even clearer. The changes that we are undertaking as an organisation will facilitate more effective representation and this means a greater say for all members.

The independent review recommended structural change that would benefit the membership in its entirety. From officers on the ground to local reps to local branch boards to the interim national council to the interim national board, together we will reposition the Federation as the voice of the service and the people we represent, thus becoming the authoritative staff association that officers need and deserve.

If we as a Federation are not representing all officers effectively, I am not doing my job. There is a way to go but when times get tough we find strength in unity. No-one knows that more than the officers out there doing the job every day in often very difficult circumstances.

*Follow me on Twitter @PFEW_Chair*

**Calls for new government investigation**

**Fed fears that cuts could be linked to increase in assaults**

The government should look at instigating an investigation into whether cuts to police numbers are causing an increase in assaults on officers, says vice-chair of the Police Federation Steve Evans.

Assaults on police officers are on the rise, with recent figures from an FOI* conducted by Police Oracle revealing there were 20,249 assaults in the 12 months to April 2014, nearly 580 more attacks than in the previous financial year.

“The government and HMIC should be investigating whether or not the issues are linked and if so, working with police to avoid further increases in assaults on officers in the future.”

With more than 16,000 fewer officers since 2009 due to government cuts to policing there has been an increase in single crewing and more assaults have been recorded.

Mr Evans said: “Policing is a dangerous profession and officers face immense risks on a daily basis putting their lives on the line to keep the public safe.

“Cuts have put a strain on resources leaving officers, particularly those who are now single crewing, in a more vulnerable situation.

“There has been no investigation into whether the increase in assaults is linked to policing cuts but the fact remains that both are occurring concurrently so logically it makes sense to examine these factors as potential causes.

“The government and the HMIC should be investigating whether or not the issues are linked and if so, working with police to avoid further increases in assaults on officers in the future.

“We need to facilitate ongoing constructive dialogue with ministers in this area.”

*Figures were from every UK force except Hampshire.*

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*Figures were from every UK force except Hampshire.*
Federation fears that revised guidance could risk the safety of officers and detainees

Custody sergeants must keep power to close suites

The Federation is warning that staff numbers in police custody suites could hit “dangerous levels” if the power to close under-staffed blocks is taken away from custody sergeants on the front line.

Andy Ward, deputy general secretary of the Police Federation and member of the National Custody Officers’ Forum, is increasingly concerned that some senior officers are trying to inhibit custody sergeants’ power to close custody suites and move such decisions further up the ranks, thereby leaving them in a worrying position.

“It is imperative that custody sergeants do not feel brow-beaten into accepting more risks than they can safely manage.”

Guidance on the safe detention and custody of detainees is set out in authorised professional practice (APP) by the College of Policing, but there are fears this is now under threat. This follows concerns from representatives across the country about local practices, and after the initial consultation draft of revised APP guidance suggested that the decision to close a suite could no longer be down to the custody sergeant responsible for the suite.

Mr Ward told Police magazine: “Custody officers are the ones held responsible for large custody suites, they are the keepers of liberty so they hold a really key role and have to ensure that PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) is followed. “Their responsibilities have increased over the years and they are increasingly dealing with vulnerable people and those with complex mental health issues. They are responsible for the welfare of all detainees; they have to ensure they are properly checked and looked after, they have to manage detention officers and are under a great deal of stress and scrutiny, particularly in relation to deaths in custody.

“We feel it’s important they are the ones who make the decisions to close if they feel levels of staffing, for example, are unsafe, as they will carry the can if things go wrong. “It is imperative for the safety of custody staff and detainees alike that custody sergeants do not feel brow-beaten into accepting more risks than they can safely manage.”

Supt Alan Greene, who is working for assistant chief constable Dawn Copley on the custody consultation, said: “The APP is currently under consultation and recommends that forces have systems that balance all the risks when looking to place detainees. In particular it encourages forces to identify the most appropriate custody office for a detainee to be booked in most efficiently.

“The guidance recommends that forces have systems that examine all the custody options across a force area before decisions are made to close individual offices. “I encourage everyone with an interest in this area of policing to review the proposed guidance and respond with their views to make their voice heard.”

A survey, carried out by Dr Jonathan Houdmont of the University of Nottingham, and published at the Federation’s annual conference in May, found around seven in ten custody sergeants want to leave their role. The two-year survey of 1,677 officers found that 60 per cent felt burnt out, and over 40 per cent had suffered anxiety or depression as a result of their job.

Doug Campbell, Police Federation sergeants’ chair, said: “With the reduction in sergeant numbers by 12 per cent nationally since 2010, the service is under pressure to maintain levels of qualified custody sergeants and supervision in general. “There is also a drive to reduce custody units and consolidate facilities on larger sites in some forces. The pressures on custody sergeants cannot be ignored.”

The Federation is pushing for forces to adhere to guidance, including issues such as taking regular breaks, and highlight the risks stress can cause for forces if things go wrong.
French connection with public

Should it take a French cycle race to nail the lie in the claim that police have only one purpose – to reduce crime? This month the country adopted cycling as a national sport. The community spirit, pride and sheer delight evident during previous large scale events, such as the London Olympics, coalesced into a celebration of pedal power. Amidst a sea of Lycra, yellow bikes and bunting, one thing was clear; the government’s perception of what the British public want from policing is seriously flawed.

As tour fever took hold, the three Yorkshire forces demonstrated exactly what those in government have failed to grasp – there is so much more to policing than crime. Thousands of police officers across the region worked long hours to ensure that millions of eager spectators could safely enjoy the sight of some of the world’s top athletes, set against the spectacular backdrops only Yorkshire can offer.

Police officers on foot, riding bicycles, on motorbikes and in patrol cars smiled and waved their way into the hearts of the British public; the evidence was there for all to see, splashed across social media thanks to #TDPolicepics. As the sun shone and the temperature rose, cups of tea and cold drinks were bestowed on grateful officers by appreciative residents.

The message was loud and clear. The British public wants visible policing, they want officers in their neighbourhoods.

Diverse teams are more effective and there needs to be change in the way the police service recruit and promote to reflect this, says Dame Shirley Pearce.

Dame Shirley, chair of the College of Policing, spoke at a meeting of the women’s reserve at the Federation’s Leatherhead HQ, and said the goal to create a diverse workforce would not be solved by “any single intervention alone”.

She told Police magazine: “It needs change on many fronts. There needs to be cultural change and a genuine understanding that diverse teams are more effective teams. It needs change in the way people are selected, managed and promoted so that opportunities become equally available to all. It will mean changes in working practices and a willingness to learn from other sectors.”

Dame Shirley added that change would be challenging and that the college itself needed to change as well as encouraging forces. “Change is not easy. It is a normal, well-documented human characteristic to feel more comfortable with people who are like you, than those who are different in some way. If most senior staff are white and male it is not surprising that, historically, more white male members of staff have been selected and promoted.”

Franstine Jones, president of the National Black Police Association, told the Police Federation’s conference recently that from 2004 to 2014 numbers of BME female officers had remained low. In senior ranks there was only one ACPO-ranking BME woman, no chief superintendents and only three superintendents.

“There needs to be a genuine understanding that diverse teams are more effective teams.”

“We need to recognise that we all have a lot more to do before we can even start to be confident that we have a culture which genuinely offers equality of opportunity for all under-represented groups,” said Dame Shirley.

This month saw the launch of the Code of Ethics which, she believes, will help those in the service to challenge inappropriate behaviour and become responsible role models. She added: “We need to get to a point where we can be confident that the public know that the police they depend on are comprised of the very best people from all parts of our communities.”

This month also sees the start of a new recruitment policy in the Met, which will recruit staff from London only in an attempt to reflect more diverse communities.
Federation make-up will need to reflect forces, communities and national picture

Diversity should be at forefront of Federation, says legal expert

The Federation will need to prove it reflects the equality and diversity in local forces and in the communities in which it works, in order to effectively represent members.

Binder Bansel, of solicitors Pattinson and Brewer, gave a legal perspective at the women’s reserve seat conference held at Federation HQ last month about what current legislation will mean for the Federation’s make-up locally and nationally.

“It’s all about providing a service to the community,” he told delegates. “There’s a strong public argument for equality and diversity to be at the forefront (of the organisation).”

Any positive action taken in the future, such as having the women’s reserve seat, will only be legitimate if it’s considered “a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim” under equality legislation (see below).

This means that in future the organisation will need to have robust statistics on the communities it represents, police officer make-up in individual forces and whether both local branch boards and the national level of the federation are an accurate reflection of their communities, forces and the national picture.

Julia Lawrence, the national women’s reserve representative, speaking at the conference, said that before the next election for fed representatives there would need to be an effective equality monitoring exercise.

Mr Bansel said that evidence gathering and assessment will need to be an ongoing exercise in future and will need to be carried out “at least once” during every tri-annual. There would also need to be national standards on how this work would be done.

The organisation will have to profile members, the force and members of branch boards, and then profile that against the wider community.

Mr Bansel said: “Everyone has to ‘buy in’ to equality and diversity and positive action or it will never be as positive as it might be – the people who are losing out will be the members.”

Mr Bansel told delegates.

History of women’s reserve seat in Federation

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 provided legislation to back the reserve seats for female representatives in a staff association. At the time unions were very male-dominated.

The Equality Act of 2010 repealed the SDA and introduced a new test and threshold for any future positive action.

Positive action is permitted under section 158 of the EA if a person reasonably thinks:

- a person has suffered a disadvantage connected to a protected characteristic
- persons who share a protected characteristic have different needs that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it
- participation in activity by persons who share a protected characteristic is disproportionately low
- any positive action measure taken will only be legitimate if they are a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

“Everyone has to ‘buy in’ to equality and diversity and positive action or it will never be as positive as it might be.”

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www.polfed.org and in the communities in which it works, in order to effectively represent members.

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Mr Bansel said: “Everyone has to ‘buy in’ to equality and diversity and positive action or it will never be as positive as it might be – the people who are losing out will be the members.”

He added that the Independent Review “does not do away with the reserve seat” but the organisation must look at the national and local make-up.

Ms Lawrence, chairing discussions at the conference, said it was “vital” that women had a voice in key decisions around the branch boards.

Mr Bansel said the Independent Review dedicates a whole chapter to equality and diversity, and that although the Federation does “a great deal” of work on equality and diversity, it had to keep working at it.

The review also recommends appointing a director of equality and diversity and the organisation would have to look at who would be the best candidate and have the best background and skills.

“If positive action works there may be a time you don’t need it (the reserve seat),” Mr Bansel told delegates.
We are, I remain convinced despite the verbal diarrhoea spouted by politicians and the media, very good at dealing with crime, catastrophe and other such operational matters. Unfortunately, we are less good when it comes to dealing with the labyrinthine processes and procedures put in place for dealing with personnel issues.

Take, for example, a colleague who has been suffering from a significant medical condition, but who has battled bravely on. He still insisted on coming to work when others would have taken time off or demanded special chairs, or whatever. His condition deteriorated inexorably to the point where he needed major surgery. He was, at the express instruction of the HR department, and to the chagrin of his line manager, put on an action plan. His manager accordingly action planned him to get an organ transplant to replace the one that was doing its level best to kill him. My colleague complied, and eventually an organ became available, so he was called in at very short notice for a transplant.

Unfortunately, the surgery and recovery meant that he now contravened the force’s attendance criteria, so the HR department promptly required him to go on another action plan to get back to work again. His manager pointed out that his absence was due solely to complying with his existing action plan, plus, of course, wanting to live long enough to collect his pension, but the machine was having none of it.

My point is that this chap was genuinely ill, needed surgery to survive, got the surgery and now wants to come back to work. The action plan was a bureaucratic waste of time which made not a scrap of difference to the outcome, but no one dares challenge the system.

His manager pointed out that his absence was due solely to complying with his existing action plan, plus, of course, wanting to live long enough to collect his pension, but the machine was having none of it.

The Police Federation needs to be more ‘family-friendly’ and change the media image of middle-aged men propping up the bar, the general secretary told delegates at a conference on equality issues.

Andy Fittes spoke at last month’s Federation women’s reserve seat meeting, which brings together representatives from around the country. He told delegates that many of those in the room representing women officers would drive change forward.

“My impression is that people work really hard trying to their best in difficult circumstances. It is frustrating that is not the image from the outside, either from the press or how officers perceive us. “The work we get done here needs to be sold better. We also need to get more family-friendly.”

The Federation’s Interim National Council meeting has already been looking at costs involved if a member of the interim board has to bring a child to PFEW HQ, the need for modular and regional training and agreed reserve seat chair and secretaries attendance at council meetings.

Steve White, chair of the Police Federation, said: “It’s the Federation’s job to fight for flexible working, family-friendly policies, equality and diversity on behalf of police officers but we haven’t focused enough on our own organisation.

“The role of the Federation comes from the force and we need to engage better with our membership in order to attract people from underrepresented groups to become fed reps.

“We have recognised that this is an area that needs work and improvement and we need to think carefully about the best ways to redress the situation.”

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Mental health expert warns current initiatives are ‘under-researched and unevaluated’

Police officers need urgent training in mental health

There is an ‘urgent need’ for adequate mental health training for all police officers, according to expert and blogger Insp Michael Brown.

In a written submission to the Home Affairs Select Committee on policing and mental health, Insp Brown highlighted the inadequacy of the current training police officers undergo. He said in his statement that officers only receive between four and eight hours and added: “Having witnessed local training provided by mental health trusts, I have also been alarmed at how wrong some of it is, legally speaking. If nothing else rings loudly from this submission, it should be the urgent need for validated, professional training for police officers at all levels.”

This echoes the concerns of the Police Federation which has called for adequate mandatory mental health awareness training delivered by mental health partners for all officers.

Insp Brown, currently seconded to the College of Policing from West Midlands Police, said in his submission that current initiatives to better manage police responses are “under-researched, unevaluated and done in the absence of proper training for officers to tackle such incidents”.

Victim Support found in 2013 that those with mental health problems were significantly over represented as victims, being at least three times more likely than the general population to experience crime. The Adebowale Report, also published last year, found that mental health issues are a contributing factor to 20 per cent of police demand.

“We can either focus on whether the police have got the right response, or we can focus on why people in mental distress are left without any other part of the public system providing help and support they need.”

Dominic Williamson, chief executive, Revolving Doors Agency, said: “The police are the one frontline public service that is there all the time in the streets dealing with the issues. We can either focus on whether the police have got the right response or we can focus on why people in mental distress, with the complex problems they often have, are left without any other part of the public system providing the kind of help and support they need.

“While I think the police are always inevitably going to be the first on the scene – and I absolutely agree with Lord Adebowale saying that mental health is core police business – the real question is how we make sure that our public services are reaching out to people, providing crisis care to people and supporting people effectively in the community, so the police do not have to be our first aid response to mental distress.”

Mr Williamson told the committee that between 2012 and 2013 there were 21,814 uses of Section 136, where police officers can detain individuals under the Mental Health Act – 60 a day across England.

He added: “We know that, across the country, 34 per cent of those were taken into police custody, so the rest would have been taken to a hospital-based place of safety. However, the joint Care Quality Commission – Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary’s report found a range between six per cent and 76 per cent in the numbers that were taken into police custody compared to a hospital-based place of safety, so there is a huge range in what is happening across the country.”
This case has the potential to limit people accessing historical material about themselves and others and we have already had enquiries from Federation members wanting defamatory content removed from the internet.

For Mario Costeja González, his bid to establish his right to be forgotten has unfortunately had the opposite effect. But his case has opened the door for others to seek the removal of material they no longer want to be found online through a Google search – or any other search engine.

Mr González complained about publications in a Spanish daily newspaper from 1998 advertising the auction of his property in relation to social security debts. The publication remained online despite the fact the debts were paid and the property was never auctioned. The Spanish courts had rejected his complaint against the newspaper because it could rely on the journalistic exemption under the Data Protection Directive, but found in his favour in his action seeking an order that Google suppress its search results which provided links to the offending publications.

Google appealed but, in what is regarded to be a huge victory for privacy rights, the European Court of Justice has essentially found against Google with a ruling that has potentially huge implications for Google and other search engines. The ruling of Europe’s highest court means that search engines are ‘data controllers’ and are responsible for the processing of personal data on web pages which can be located using their search results.

As a result, search engines such as Google have to remove links and results where the web page contains data which is “irrelevant, outdated or otherwise inappropriate”. Google has already responded by expanding its online service for the removal of information appearing in search results. Users can now request the removal of certain content from search results on the basis it breaches European privacy law.

To a large extent, the removal of links from Google search results could prevent that information being found, because Google is the main research tool for people.

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To a large extent, the removal of links from Google search results could prevent that information being found, because Google is the main research tool for people.

Although it recognised a ‘right to be forgotten’, it is clear Google intend to carry out the envisaged balancing exercise between the privacy rights of the individual and the rights of the search engine and its other users, and will not simply delete upon request.

Only time, and thousands of removal requests, will tell what the scope of this ruling will be and how it will impact upon the way search engines operate.

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Tributes flood in for inspirational teen
Family of teenager Joe vow to continue cancer fundraising

The family of teenager Joe Ellis who passed away last month will continue raising money for other children with cancer.

Tributes have flooded in for the inspirational 13-year-old and his family want to continue raising money in Joe’s memory to help others.

The family of teenager Joe Ellis who passed away last month will continue raising money for other children with cancer.

Tributes have flooded in for the inspirational 13-year-old and his family want to continue raising money in Joe’s memory to help others.

PC Simon Ellis, Joe’s dad, is an officer in Hampshire Police and many colleagues in his force and others, as well as family and friends in the Isle of Wight, have been supporting efforts to raise £100,000 towards a new drug available in the US that they hoped could help treat the aggressive form of cancer.

Although the campaign was only launched last month, it had raised more than half the funds before the family posted the following sad news about Joe on their Facebook fundraising page last month.

“It is with a very heavy heart I post this today; some days life deals a body blow that can seem impossible to recover from. Today is that day. Today we learned that we lost our very precious Joe Ellis. His enjoyment of life was immense and his fight for that life simply astonishing.

“As you would expect his family have a huge void that will never be filled. The family has been overwhelmed by the support shown to them throughout their fight.”

The family would now like the cause to continue and be a legacy for Joe by helping another family in a similar situation.

John Apter, chair of Hampshire Police Federation, said that the police family had really come together to support Joe. “The police family came together and raised thousands for this campaign. In his short life Joe inspired so many people and touched their hearts.”

Latest figures show more than £90,000 has been raised. You can follow the campaign on Twitter and Facebook under #joesjourney. You can find more information at facebook.com/pages/Joes-Fund-Raising-Page/8686306548515
Some people just don’t know their three Rs from their elbow...

One summer’s day a probationary officer and his tutor constable from Newcastle-under-Lyme in sunny Staffordshire were dispatched to deal with a shoplifting incident at the local pound shop.

En route the probationer was briefed on the job and told to deal with it.

On arrival the probationer was informed that a male had been in the store and stolen a number of toiletry items such as deodorants etc.

Being keen he enthusiastically took down the description of the offender and details. “What has he stolen?” asked the officer.

“Seven deodorants and four shower gels,” came the reply.

“And how much are they?” said the officer.

“Well you’re in a pound shop,” said the amused store manager.

“Yes, but what’s the value?” insisted the officer.

The store manager replied: “Well you’re in a pound shop and he’s taken 11 items. How much do you think?”

“Oooh about £15.80,” said the officer.

Doh...
Police officers from all over the country showed what community spirit is all about while on duty during the prestigious Tour de France which kicked off in Yorkshire.

Crowds gathered to see the event, which set off from Leeds for ‘Le Grand Départ’, donning an array of weird and wonderful outfits, including yellow onesies dedicated to the colour of the famous yellow jersey of the winner.

Officers and those who lined the routes on the stages from Leeds to London, posted pictures on social media under the hashtag #TDFPolicePics. Photos of officers getting involved in local...
community events and ensuring everything went smoothly, as well as posing with those gathered have popped up all over twitter.

Steve Evans, vice-chair of the Police Federation, said: “This is an example of officers getting involved in their communities and demonstrates how important it is that they have a presence, not only at times where people are in fear but also during the good times when they are there to protect the public and be involved in community policing.

“It just shows that policing is not just about fighting crime. Well done to all those who took part and supported the event.”
When he was a teenager, around 18 years old, Nicholas was inspired to join The Job. His brother was a police officer and he'd heard all the exciting stories and thought it would offer variety and an adrenaline buzz. Fairly typical teenager tick list.

"I was never academically clever," he says, though he went to grammar school in Hertfordshire. "When I passed my medical for the police and heard I had been accepted, I told a friend, we celebrated and he introduced me to cocaine."

Now 32, Nicholas said, at the time, the drug really boosted his confidence levels and filled the gap left by insecurities. "I became the person I had always wanted to be, it was a crutch and made me feel euphoric. I didn't think it was a problem; I didn't think 'I have to stop'."

He began to focus on doing well at training college in Hendon during the 18-week residential course, but he was struggling with the academic work and staying up until late to catch up. "I was under a bit of pressure as to whether I would pass and ended up taking cocaine to keep me up while I was working. I started getting 90/95 per cent in my papers."

When he was not at Hendon, he would be back in his family home; after his passing out parade he graduated and was earning around £26,000 at the time. "I had no outlay as I was living at home, I had the money so why would I stop taking cocaine?" he tells Police magazine. Posted to north London, he actually started duties in Hampstead where things were 'good' until the credit card debt started to build up. After a year, he became aware it was a problem but says he was in 'massive denial'.

Measuring around 5ft 10ins, he went from around 12 stone to eight. "None of my colleagues mentioned anything at all; my family noticed and I think my brother had his suspicions, and I got sent to the doctors for tests. I told my parents I had just simply lost my appetite."

The cost of getting a regular cocaine high was now outstripping his ability to earn as a police officer and he looked to a more lucrative career to fund the habit. One of his best friends from a successful boy band suggested he go into property as an estate agent.

Features

It was here that he began stealing from vacant houses and taking goods to a place that exchanges items for cash which he could then plough into his burgeoning habit. "I began turning into something I wasn't... it's a weird drug which makes you feel really egotistical while you're actually doing really low-life stuff."

Things were going from bad to worse – as he built up debts with drug dealers, he was slashed on the neck and eventually he did what he calls a 'geographical'; he went AWOL to

Stepping over the line

How do you go from young fresh-faced police probationer from Hertfordshire to drug-runner for the Albanian mafia? Former police officer Nicholas Conn explains how his life spiralled out of control, and how he has turned it around to help addicts. Syreeta Lund writes
another country and got a job with a travel agency in Austria as a snowboarding instructor.

"I thought it would be good to get away, snow-topped mountains..." he says. But the craving was still there and he soon found another dealer, but couldn't fund the habit. He created a way to find extra cash and basically scammed tourists on the buses coming in. He would stand and deliver a guided tour as they came to the resort on the coach and tell them it was customary to tip the driver, who didn't speak English, collecting their money in a plastic bag. He could make about 100 euros a time. But cocaine was failing to give him the buzz he desired and he turned to drink too. When the resort work finished and he went back to the UK, he again built up debts of around £3,000. "It doesn't
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sound much but when you are faced with a habit that cost £30 or £40 a time it seems unachievable.”

He again scarpered from the UK, getting a job at an international property company that had a base in Berlin. “I ended up at this club and there was an Albanian guy with a couple of women with him, I decided to ask him if he knew where to get me some gear,” he says, adding that the next minute a waiter turned up and revealed a brown envelope containing around 100g of cocaine.

“I was there was terrible, my ego kept me on the streets as I couldn’t call my parents. Some military guys went to piss on me and I punched him in the crotch. I curled up in a ball because I knew what was coming; I woke up the next day covered in blood.”

Broken by his experiences, it was at this point that Nick decided to call his mum; he told her everything and she arranged a hotel for him and a flight home. He went into rehabilitation and held a number of jobs before setting up the help4addiction helpline, which is funded by private rehabilitation centres and gives independent advice on how to seek funding and different services for addicts and their families. They have access to different types of counselling and accredited counsellors.

“I know drugs and alcohol can be a problem with police officers who may not want to admit or talk about it. We offer a service outside of the force that can help – I want to give back to the police,” he says.

Nick says his life is now “amazing”, and he is due to get married this year. “I still have to work on my selflessness and take an inventory every day… something I never did before.”

Find out more information about the help4addiction service at help4addiction.co.uk
Community commitment

The Queen’s Birthday Honours highlights just some of those who have gone the extra mile for their communities. Syreeta Lund speaks to the inspiring West Yorkshire officer who has helped ‘glue’ his diverse community together in the face of adversity.
PC Rehill says there were those who viewed him as a ‘spy’ but the fact he is part of the community itself has engendered trust. “I just provide the glue really to get everyone talking to each other in my community,” he tells Police magazine.

His area, which includes Leeds Road, has a Catholic church, Hindu Temple, Muslim Mosque, a Sikh Gurdwara and an Anglican Cathedral in the space of one mile. “I set up a monthly meeting of the faith leaders just to help everyone communicate and understand each other,” he says. He adds that it can really help to diffuse any tensions if people are concerned about particular issues.

PC Rehill has managed to gain the trust of leaders in the community and is also happy to ensure anything they may be interested, he says. PC Rehill spends his spare time teaching boxing to disadvantaged young people “or anyone who is interested”, he says.

What is Prevent?
Prevent hopes that through more effective engagement the police can get a better understanding of communities – any specific issues they face and how residents feel when their stability is threatened. In the long-term this helps to reduce the potential for problems or extremism, building more resilient communities.

In turn, information developed through stronger community networks and enhanced working relationships with primary care trusts, local authorities, schools, universities and partner agencies, helps to inform local policing efforts. Where appropriate, it also steers multi-agency projects to improve communities and identify positive ways of discouraging people from becoming involved in criminal or extremist activity.

Prevent is one of four elements of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy. You can find more information about the strategy and the four elements online, at gov.uk/government/policies/protecting-the-uk-against-terrorism.

‘They are a credit to the service’
Police Federation chair Steve White has paid tribute to the exceptional police officers who were recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list for 2014.

Officers and staff from across England and Wales were recognised by the Queen’s Police Medal, while others (including PC Yasvender Singh Rehill, left) from across the UK have been awarded ‘Higher Awards’ for their contribution to policing and their communities.

Speaking after the awards were published, Mr White said: “It is truly humbling to see so many of this country’s police officers and staff awarded such prestigious recognition for their contribution to policing. The Queen's Birthday Honours recognise the finest and most distinguished service given to the British public. "Policing remains a great institution and I am extremely proud to work with so many inspiring and dedicated men and women. Those honoured are a credit to the service and to the communities they serve. Congratulations to each and every one of them.”

Below is a list of some of the officers and staff who were recognised in the Queen’s Birthday Honours; the full list can be found online, at gov.uk/honours/honours-lists.

The Queen’s Police Medal (QPM)

PC Karen MacDonald,
Avon and Somerset Constabulary

PC Keith Openshaw,
Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Det Ch Insp David Shipperlee,
British Transport Police,

Det Ch Supt Kenneth Stewart,
City of London Police

Chief Constable Michael Barton,
Durham Constabulary

Deputy Chief Constable Derek Benson,
Essex Police

Assistant Chief Constable Steven Heywood,
Greater Manchester Police

Ch Supt Kevin Mulligan,
Greater Manchester Police

Chief Constable Jeffery Farrar,
Gwent Police

Assistant Chief Constable Alison Roome-Gifford,
Hertfordshire Constabulary

Assistant Chief Constable Andrew Cooke,
Merseyside Police

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Martin Hewitt,
Metropolitan Police Service

PC Robert Brown,
Metropolitan Police Service

PC John Keen,
Metropolitan Police Service

PC Gaynor Grout,
Surrey Police

Det Ch Supt Brendan O’Dowda,
Thames Valley Police

Assistant Chief Constable Sharon Rowe,
West Midlands Police

PC Robert Bowman,
West Yorkshire Police

Higher Awards

Chief Constable John Murphy QPM,
Merseyside Police; Knight Bachelor of the Order of the British Empire

Deputy Chief Constable Judith Gillespie OBE,
PSNI; Commander of the Order of the British Empire

Ms Beryl Clark, volunteer,
Lancashire Constabulary; Member of the Order of the British Empire

PC Amanda Carroll Dickens,
South Yorkshire Police; Member of the Order of the British Empire

Paul Brent Newman, PCSO Supervisor,
South Yorkshire Police; Member of the Order of the British Empire

Philip Sheldon, Force Strategic Finance Manager,
Derbyshire Constabulary; Member of the Order of the British Empire

SC John Giles, Metropolitan Police Service; Medallist of the Order of the British Empire

SC Kevin Lee, Staffordshire Police;
Medallist of the Order of the British Empire

Mrs Alicia Elizabeth Palmer, PSNI; Medallist of the Order of the British Empire

PC Yasvender Singh Rehill, West Yorkshire Police; Medallist of the Order of the British Empire
Consequences of 20% cuts to policing?

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www.polfed.org
Recognition for Kevin’s 36 years of service

One of Staffordshire’s most dedicated volunteer police officers has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to policing in the Queen’s Birthday Honours.

Special Constable Kevin Lee first joined Staffordshire Police in November 1977 and worked as a both a response officer and more latterly as a local neighbourhood officer in the town of Rugeley in Staffordshire. He retired from the regular force following 34 dedicated years’ service, but in his desire to continue to provide a first class policing service to the local community continued and he applied to become a Special Constable.

Kevin re-joined Staffordshire Police as a Special Constable the day after his retirement as a regular officer, providing a highly visible and accessible presence within the area.

Kevin is currently an acting Special Sergeant at Rugeley, and has patrolled the Rugeley community for the last 20 years. Speaking about the award of the BEM, Kevin said: “I was stunned to have been nominated for this honour; I am very proud to be part of Staffordshire Police and I simply enjoy working with people, it makes me feel very proud to be recognised and I find it an real honour and privilege.”

Staffordshire’s chief constable, Mike Cunningham said: “Kevin should be very proud of his achievements. Residents in his beat area tell us they feel privileged to retain his services and he is well established and an integral part of the local community and plays a significant role in daily life, keeping the community safe and being available when they need him as a reassuring influence.

“Throughout his total service of over 36 years, he has not been absent for a single day through sickness, which is a fantastic achievement and testament to his dedication to public service. As a Special Constable, he completes 40 hours of voluntary service every week, dealing with a wide range of policing activities, from preventing and investigating crime to supporting victims and the more vulnerable members of the community. He is a true professional, thoroughly dedicated to his local community and well respected by all who come into contact with him – he is a credit to Staffordshire Police.”

Double delight for South Yorkshire force as Amanda and Paul both receive MBEs in the Birthday Honours

It was double delight for two members of the South Yorkshire Police team based in Rotherham after they were awarded MBEs in The Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

For PC Amanda Dickens and PCSO supervisor Paul Newman not only booked a date with royalty, they also used to work together. Amanda explained: “We had similar neighbourhood issues – Paul at Kimberworth and me at Eastwood – so we got together and formed ‘Talentastic’ which ran for two years to try and keep kids out of trouble around Bonfire Night. It’s a pleasure to be honoured with him.”

Amanda, 39, from Doncaster, said she “couldn’t quite believe it” when she was honoured for services to policing and the community in Rotherham. “It didn’t sink in. It’s lovely but a bit scary. I didn’t know if it was a wind-up. I read it and re-read it; you think why and how have I got it just for doing what you do.”

Since Amanda joined the force in 2002, she has worked in neighbourhood policing, before switching in April to the Maltby-based team tackling child sexual exploitation.

“I’m just in shock about the MBE, but very proud and honoured to have it,” she added.

Paul has worked for the force for 31 years, spending the last seven as a PCSO supervisor in Rotherham. He was awarded his MBE for services to policing and the community in South Yorkshire. “The PCSO job offers so much opportunity,” said 54-year-old Paul, from Sheffield. “If you use it as best as you can you get your reward and this honour is the greatest award. I’m chuffed to bits and have been smiling like a Cheshire cat.”

Chief superintendent Jason Harwin, the district commander for Rotherham, added: “I’m absolutely delighted for Paul and Amanda. They work tirelessly in our communities to make a real difference to the lives of many. These awards are testimony to their commitment to public service.”
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View from the Sidelines – Clive Chamberlain, former chair of Dorset Police Federation

When the chips are down...

Police officers perform an extraordinary role but are ordinary human beings, and as with anyone else will break if overloaded.

It is little wonder that instances of stress, fatigue and PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) are on the increase in police forces (see The Telegraph, June 30). Issues such as 16,000 fewer officers, increased demand, forced overtime and refused annual leave are all impacting negatively on the well-being of officers and their families.

Balancing the needs of an individual against those of the ‘job’ is not easy; perhaps recognising that officers are people and not simply a ‘human resource’ might help.

While discussing health, with the first hint of sun peeping through the clouds Mrs C has decided that summer has arrived and with it we are to commence the annual (loathsome) ‘healthy-eating’ regime!

The issue that I have with this is not so much what we are going to eat, but more importantly what is to be excluded from my diet. Potatoes (especially chips) and bread are to be replaced by salads and cold pasta; additionally instead of puddings and ice-cream we are to have fruit!

The most worrying aspect of Mrs C’s attempts at proselytisation is that she is quite expert at policing this nightmare and so far I have been unable to sneak anything containing any e-numbers, sugar or fat unnoticed into the house. I did smuggle in some digestive biscuits last week, but the dog (treacherous swine) is rather fond of them and gave the game away by wagging his tail and trying to pull the packet out from behind a cushion on the settee.

I have resigned myself to months of lettuce, raw spinach and kumquats and decided I might as well go the whole way and start wearing sandals, driving a car that looks like a sawn-off pram and eating brown rice for breakfast.

Nick O’Tme

Colin Whittock
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