

FEDERATION NEWS

The magazine of Staffordshire Police Federation

MAY 2021



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SUPPORT YOUR COLLEAGUES AND DEVELOP YOUR OWN SKILLS

By Glyn Pattinson, secretary of Staffordshire Police Federation

The forthcoming Federation elections present an opportunity for our branch to become truly representative of its members, in the same way that forces are trying to properly reflect the communities we serve.

But there are other opportunities too. There are opportunities for officers to come forward to represent, support and advise their colleagues as workplace representatives, roles that can be challenging and rewarding. Beyond that, and something that can be missed, is the fact that the Federation training given to workplace reps can also benefit an officer in terms of their personal and professional development.

I first became a Federation representative in 2011. Having moved to the Major Investigation Department, I was fortunate enough to work alongside a very good work-based detective inspector who was a rep. I saw first-hand the work he did and also the enhanced insight into policing that he was lucky to get through his Federation role.

On his retirement, I was encouraged to seek election and I can honestly say I have never looked back, becoming secretary in November 2016.

I firmly believe the skills, training and exposure you get as a rep not only make you a better police officer but also a better supervisor. Our role is all about fair representation and being that advocate on behalf of colleagues is incredibly rewarding



and satisfying.

The reason that I became a rep is ultimately the same reason that I joined the police... a desire to do the right thing and help people.

So, have you ever considered putting yourself forward as a Federation rep? And, if you have, what is actually stopping you?

We are striving to ensure that our Branch Council, the body made up of our elected workplace reps, is representative of the membership. This means not only in terms of protected characteristics, such as gender and ethnicity, but also in terms of rank, role and geography across the whole of Staffordshire.

The election process has certain safeguards to help with this and I sincerely hope we attract interest from all over the Force, including young in service officers.

It is so important that we are both visible and accessible to our colleagues. There can be no greater satisfaction than helping someone in their time of need.

The training provided to work-based reps is excellent starting with the basic four-day induction course and then opening up to further opportunities to specialise in areas such as conduct and performance, equality, post-incident procedures plus health and safety.

The election process starts at the beginning of July but now is the time to find out more about the role of a Federation representative and the opportunities offered.

Please contact me if you would like further information, ask a few questions of your local rep or visit polfed.org/campaigns/ reps-work

Keep up to date at staffordshire.polfed.org

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Tel: 01785 242215. Fax: 01785 254426. Email: info@staffs.polfed.org

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OFFICER WELLBEING INVOLVES US ALL WORKING TOGETHER

By Phil Jones, chair of Staffordshire Police Federation

Officer wellbeing is a key priority for Staffordshire Police Federation, particularly this year given the impact of the pandemic on police officers.

But this is not an area where we can work in isolation. Officer wellbeing involves us all working together – the Force, the Federation, police officers, their families, their colleagues and the many organisations that are on hand to offer extra support.

As a Federation, we clearly raise our concerns with the Force and regularly discuss with chief officers the issues our members are facing and we do all we can to support officers we know are facing particular difficulties, be that due to conduct investigations, challenges within the workplace or other matters.

Sometimes it can be as simple as us providing a listening ear and some general advice to a member, either through our workplace representatives or our full-time officials. At other times, we may put members in touch with someone who can offer more specialist support, perhaps by reminding subscribing members of the Group Insurance Scheme of the excellent

services available through Best Doctors or the Care First counselling service.

Policing the pandemic has put additional pressures on police officers who, it goes without saying, already carry out a critical and demanding role in their communities.

Multiple changes to legislation and guidance, often at short notice, certainly made policing difficult. Officers were on the frontline from Day 1, facing an unseen enemy in the face of a deadly virus that, at the start of the pandemic, we knew very little about.

They did what they always do – put their lives on the line to serve and protect the public.

Yet, behind their uniforms, officers were facing the same anxieties and concerns as other people. They were worried about contracting the virus, passing it on to their families, particularly vulnerable loved ones, and they were not immune from financial difficulties, maybe because their husband or wife had lost their job or been furloughed.

The Federation's demand, capacity and welfare survey revealed many of the difficulties officers were facing.

And, it is for this reason, that I want to encourage all members to look out for their colleagues. We are all in this together and

it is really important that we all look after each other. We need to talk to more and we also need to listen. Simply asking someone if they are OK and offering a sympathetic ear with a supportive comment can make all the difference.

But, of course, you can take it further than that if you feel you could support colleagues in a more formal way.

In July, the Federation will be holding elections in all 43 branches of the staff association.

As such, we are encouraging all members to consider if they could do more to help their colleagues.

Perhaps you have had good support from your Fed rep and you want to be able to do the same for fellow officers or maybe you have been an armchair critic who feels the Federation could do more.

Either way, now is the time for you to act. Find out more about being a Federation rep by speaking to a current rep or contacting the office based officials and consider standing for election.

There is no doubt being a workplace rep can be challenging but, hand on heart, it is also one of the most rewarding roles you can undertake.

COVER PHOTO STORY

CHARLIE HELPS VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Staffordshire Sergeant Charlie Emmett has helped launch a partnership between the Force and a local charity to help vulnerable families and domestic abuse victims receive extra support.

Stoke-on-Trent North Neighbourhood Policing Team's (NPT) Harm Reduction Hub has teamed up with Alice Charity, an organisation based in Newcastle which helps disadvantaged and vulnerable families.

The partnership came as a result of Charlie, deputy commander at Stoke North NPT, reaching out to the charity after identifying the need for quick and practical help for vulnerable families.

"I've always been very interested in what Alice Charity does, as I actually went to school with its founder, Emily," said Charlie, who regularly chairs the multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC).

The MARAC is coordinated by police but involves a number of organisations and is a meeting involving the sharing of information, while agreeing actions to safeguard and prevent harm for the highest risk domestic abuse cases. Its aim is to stop people being seriously injured or killed as a result of domestic abuse.

"Alice Charity supports families on a practical level, which is



Sergeant Charlie Emmett.

something the Force just doesn't have the budget for," added Charlie, who has been an officer for 14 years.

"I felt like they could bridge the gap between the support we can give and the practical needs of vulnerable families.

"I wanted to see if the families we work with could benefit from Alice Charity, so I got in contact with them. Within days, one young mother who was expecting another child was quickly provided with an array of practical items, including new drawers for the baby's room and a fridge freezer.

"My vulnerability coordinator was amazed and together we thought we could go that one step further by creating a solid partnership with the charity."

Charlie set up a meeting with the charity and invited Emily in to speak to the team at the Harm Reduction Hub.

Stoke North Police now work with Alice Charity, with the Force able to refer those it feels need support via a specially created form or email.

"The partnership is in its infancy, but the benefits are already showing," added Charlie, "I hope that in the future, the partnership can develop across more of the areas that Alice Charity covers."

The Alice Charity was set up in 2011 and now works with a number of agencies to identify those in need and help them through various donations.

Welfare van welcomed by members

FRONTLINE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN MAKING THE MOST OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FEDERATION WELFARE VAN

The specially-converted vehicle provides officers with somewhere to sit, get warm and have a hot drink while working on jobs and scenes.

It is equipped with a microwave oven, fast charge ports for phones and TV facilities and is available 24 hours a day through the on call Staffordshire Police Federation representatives.

Phil Jones, chair of Staffordshire Police Federation, said the van comes into its own when it is deployed at crime scenes in isolated locations where officers would otherwise have no access to refreshments.

It is also used by officers on duty at big Stoke City and Port Vale games and also by

those policing protest marches across the county.

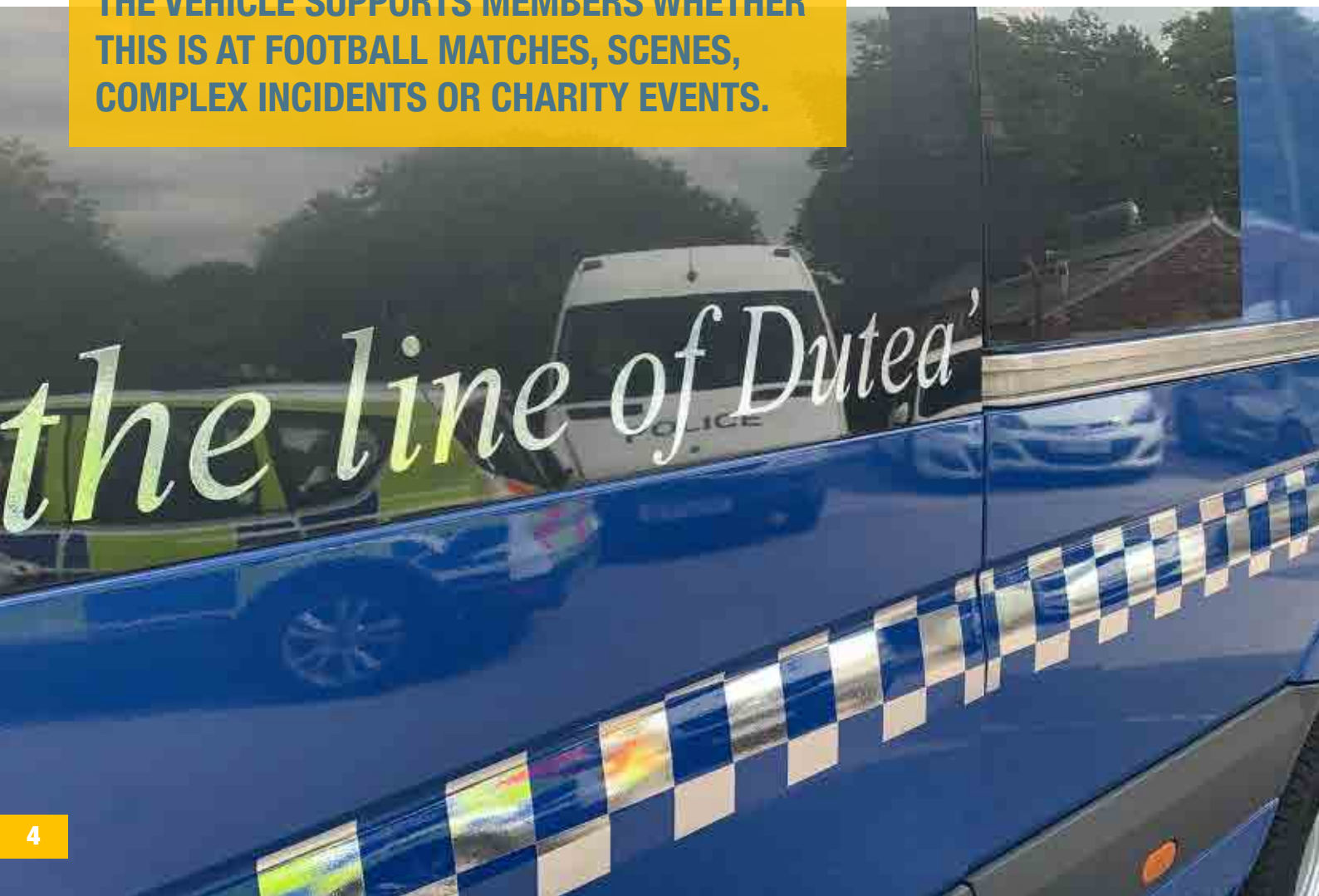
Phil said the welfare van had gone down exceptionally well with frontline officers with one telling him: 'Having your rest day cancelled is bad enough but to have this van and the ability to have a hot drink, makes it a little better'.

"The vehicle supports members whether this is at football matches, scenes, complex incidents or charity events," said Phil.

"The vehicle also offers the opportunity to get out to stations, improve visibility and take a one stop approach to the services we offer to members."



THE VEHICLE SUPPORTS MEMBERS WHETHER THIS IS AT FOOTBALL MATCHES, SCENES, COMPLEX INCIDENTS OR CHARITY EVENTS.



HAVE YOU DOWNLOADED OUR APP?

Staffordshire Police Federation has launched a new smartphone app giving members instant access to any information they need on the go.

The app is available to download for free on Apple and Android devices and is designed to help the Federation improve communications with members by offering all the latest advice, FAQs and documents.

Staffordshire Police Federation chair Phil Jones said: "One of the things I set out to do in this role was to improve communication with our members, and the app allows us to do that.

"It's easy to use and really is a one stop shop. Whether you're searching for regulations or needing travel insurance documents, it's all there.

"The app has a feedback section, so that members can contact me in real-time and give good and bad comments. Plus it has sections on wellbeing and the latest news."

The app also allows members to receive instant messages from the Federation.

Phil said: "Sending out real-time messages to the membership improves our ability to communicate. We're very proud of it, and we hope our members like it too."

Members can download the new app by searching for Staffordshire Police Federation on their smartphone app store.



Could you support your colleagues?

THE POLICE FEDERATION ELECTIONS, WHICH START FROM 1 JULY THIS YEAR, GIVE MEMBERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR THE COLLEAGUES THEY WANT TO REPRESENT THEM LOCALLY AND NATIONALLY.

Workplace representatives and full-time Federation officials support and advise members in matters such as conduct, pay, allowances, terms and conditions, equality, professional development and operational policing issues.

Elections for Federation reps are held every three years with interim elections being organised if positions become vacant. The 2018 national elections were the first held under new procedures introduced after the Independent Review of the Police Federation.

Each force has a Federation Branch Council made up of its workplace reps. Branches then elect a Branch Board, including a chair, secretary and treasurer.

As part of the election process, the Federation is promoting its Reps@Work campaign to highlight the vital and incredible work Federation reps do to support members locally and nationally.

The campaign hopes to encourage others to consider a career as a Federation rep by showcasing the stories behind what made members want to become a rep and how the rewarding role can support career development.

You can find out more at polfed.org/campaigns/reps-work/

Three of our current workplace representatives give an insight into the role, and their motivation for taking on the role, on the following pages. ▶

Reps@Work

INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE?

If you are considering standing for election as a Federation rep, please contact Staffordshire Police Federation secretary Glyn Pattinson by emailing gpattinson@staffs.polfed.org

FED REP LOOKING TO IMPROVE REPRESENTATION ENCOURAGES OTHERS TO STAND FOR ROLE

A Staffordshire Police Federation workplace representative is urging fellow members to stand during the elections in the hope that minority and ethnic groups will become better represented.

Sergeant Razwana (Raz) Nasheen, who joined the Force in 2007, became a Fed rep three years ago having returned to the job following maternity leave.

The mother-of-two explains that she has a passion for trying to bridge the gap between the Federation and minority and ethnic groups.

"I'm Asian and female, two groups that I don't think are represented enough in our Federation reps," said Raz, who is also vice-chair of the Multi-Cultural Association.

"I wanted to challenge the stereotype. I firmly believe that Fed reps should reflect society, so we can best support our members.

"Sometimes, I know people don't want to approach the Federation because there's nobody that 'looks like them', which is just wrong. I want to help change that."

Raz, who says that she first became a rep so she could better understand her rights at work, explains that being in the role has improved the support she can provide for her staff.

"I like to know my rights and I like to feed that back to members too," she added, "Being a rep has definitely changed my role, for the better."

Raz says that during the Covid-19 pandemic, she was able to support members and is continuing to do so as the restrictions ease.

"My help has definitely had a positive impact on my colleagues," she continued, "Being a Fed rep has just become part of my job now."

"I was able to assist members with certain policy changes during the pandemic and pass on important information. Now, our support is needed even more, as members start to return back to the office."

Raz says she urges anyone who is considering becoming a rep to go for it and 'not be scared' of putting themselves forward.

"I can't believe how much I've learnt from being a Fed rep," she says, "It's extremely fulfilling, and I would encourage others to do so. It won't just benefit you but it will benefit those around you too."



MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

John Kenny says his experience of receiving help from the Police Federation made him stand for election as a workplace representative.

He says the support he received was “great” and so wanted to make a “positive impact” for Staffordshire Police colleagues.

John, who became a Fed rep at the last round of elections in 2018, said: “I’d received help from the Federation on a couple of occasions with regards to the complaints process and with a post-incident procedure from a firearms incident.

“The reps on each occasion were great and guided me through what was required making the whole thing a lot easier. I’d also heard some horror stories of local reps not showing any interest in members’ problems. I decided to put myself forward and hope to be a rep that will make a positive impact for people.”

John added: “I like getting positive results for officers who need help or guidance. It’s not many roles that do open the doors for face to face meetings with senior managers to discuss issues at ground level.

“After all of these meetings you come out with an understanding of where the bosses are coming from, even if you don’t agree with them.”

John’s areas of interest are conduct and performance, and he said his priorities are keeping members informed on things that may affect them.

He added: “My role is listening to the issues facing them, or even identifying things that aren’t right but just seem to be accepted. I then ensure we raise any issues with the senior management in the correct way so you can have a constructive dialogue with them and are not seen as some Fed whinger or troublemaker.”

And he said the role can be frustrating in a couple of ways.

“The first is when you hear all the moaners about what the Fed don’t do,” he said, “You’ll be the face people will hold responsible for things out of your control. The Force cancels rest days and it’s almost as if the Fed is blamed for it and you’re personally held accountable.

“The second is when, after a lot of hard work, you don’t get the result you want. You can feel that you’ve let an officer down even though you know you put everything into it.

“It’s at this point that the self-reflection and debriefs I had to do in my role as an authorised firearms officer can help massively in moving forward.”

But despite that, John is encouraging officers thinking of standing at the upcoming Federation elections to “take the leap and do it”.

“Anyone can sit and mouth off about how it should be done, or what they would do if they were a rep,” he said, “Actions speak far louder than words. If you want to effect positive change then stand and make that difference.”

Indeed, John’s immediate target is to get re-elected as a Federation rep in this year’s elections and to continue his conduct and standards work.

“Working as a Fed rep can be quite a fluid role,” he said, “I might be talking to professional standards one day and then helping an officer achieve some kind of work-life balance in a meeting with their inspector over part-time working the next day.

“I have no firm fixed ideas and tend to move with what’s required at the time.”

Currently a dog handler based at headquarters, John joined the Force in March 1998.



FED REP URGES FELLOW MEMBERS TO STAND IN ELECTIONS

“If you are finding the Force a difficult place to be then try to enhance your career while helping your colleagues by becoming a Federation rep,” says PC Claire Bond, who is encouraging fellow members to stand at the elections.

Claire, who joined the Force 20 years ago, says she wants others to join her in helping to change the perception of the Federation.

Having become a rep in 2018, the mother-of-four and grandmother-of-three says she is trying to encourage the Federation to be proactive, not just reactive.

“I want our members to know that we care,” said Claire, “My teeth grind when I hear people say the Federation doesn’t do anything until you need them.

“I want to change people’s attitude towards the Federation. I want to help and shout about the work we do. I want us to get ourselves known, so people feel they can approach us for advice and support.”

Claire explains that there is so much more to being a Federation rep than she initially thought.

“Another Fed rep left so there was a gap that needed filling and people said I was the person to take on the role,” she added.

“I joined at such a great time because the Federation was kind of rebranding itself to become a contactable body of people who supports its members.”

Claire first joined the police in 2001 at the age of 29. She says that it was a ‘life-changing time’ for her, as she walked into a local station in Staffordshire and asked how she could apply.

“I’ve loved it ever since,” she continues, “It’s been everything and more I thought it would be.”

In 2018, Claire’s life was turned upside down when she was involved in an assault which led to her needing both physical and mental health support.

Having returned to work last year, just before the start of the pandemic, Claire is now passionate about helping others using her own experience. She says she wants to give back having received so much support herself.

“I want to show people that if I can go back to work, anyone can,” Claire added, “I think the incident has shaped me and it’s given me a focus.”

Claire says that it is more important than ever right now for the Federation to support its members.

“The wellbeing side of things is huge. My Federation and I have played a big part in securing the funding for a new mental health app which will be launched across the Force later this year, which will give officers access to support 24/7.”

Claire is urging fellow members to consider putting themselves forward to be a Federation rep, not only to help their peers but to input into the future of the Force too.

“This is your chance to use your knowledge and understanding of police to help others now and in the future,” she says.

“Nothing is expected of you other than being that bridge between members and the support that is available to them. If people are interested then I would advise them to speak to and shadow other reps, while discussing with them what you can offer.”





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