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The Magazine of Cheshire Police Federation

Spring 2026



Incredible Bravery

PC Phil Burgess Is Our 2026 Winner



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cheshirebeat

The magazine of Cheshire Police Federation

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Celebrating Our Incredible Cheshire Police Officers



Jamie Thompson
Chair
Cheshire Police
Federation

Welcome to the latest edition of Cheshire Beat. There's no other place to start than our annual Cheshire Police Bravery Awards which we held in March.

It was once again a fantastic event celebrating the best of the best across our county.

The event really showcases the work of our members, and the courage and commitment and the compassion that they show to members of the public when they're doing the job that they do (see pages 8-18).

We couldn't have done it without our sponsors – including our lead sponsors Axon. Anne and Libby from our offices were brilliant and the hard working team from MartisMedia helped deliver a superb event.

This recognises the disruption to protected rest and family commitments.

In their submission to the Government-controlled Police Remuneration Review Body, the National Police Chiefs' Council has proposed to remove that safeguard, and have suggested that officers are paid at time-and-one-third, calculated in 15-minute increments, for the exact time worked. The submission also seeks to tighten the rules around how cancelled rest days are re-rostered.

Beware of wolves in sheep's clothing... it's been badged as a wellbeing issue and they say this is about ensuring that officers get those rest days and are entitled to those rest days.

But it's not those officers who are cancelling those rest days. This is an issue caused by demand and underfunding

For Chiefs to say "Well, we know we're still going to need you, but we want to pay you less", I think is quite disingenuous to the rank and file. And it is purely just a money-saving exercise.

that they're looking after. It's a time for them to refocus, to re-energise and come back refreshed.

But that constant interruption, which is what we see because of the demands of policing at the moment, means that they're not getting it.

We urge Government to reject the proposals and instead work with officers to strengthen, not dilute, the protections that allow them to serve the public safely and sustainably.

Pay And Conditions

When it comes to police officer pay, the Police Federation of England and Wales has asked for a 7% pay rise for police officers this year. The same next year, and 7% once again the following year. This would get police officer wages back to something like what they should be.

We are still not active members of the Police Remuneration Review Body as it's so far from being independent. And its recommendations are not binding on the Home Secretary. It is in no way a negotiating body.

"The event really showcases the work of our members, and the courage and commitment and the compassion that they show to members of the public when they're doing the job"

Our overall winner was PC Phil Burgess, who is probably one of the most humble people I've ever met. Phil was recognised for running into live motorway traffic and narrowly dodging HGVs to heroically rescue a man in crisis.

We look forward to celebrating him at the National Police Bravery Awards in July.

Overall the Cheshire Police Federation Police Bravery Awards was one of those proud dad moments for me as Chair of Cheshire Police Federation. Roll on 2027!

Rest Day Disappointment

I would like to raise the issue of rest days. Police officers are currently entitled to a minimum four hours' compensation at time-and-a-half when they are required to work on a cancelled rest day.

The reason the Police Regulations were brought in the way they were was to disincentivise forces from abusing officers on rest days, and abusing the fact that they can be called back in. And that's the jeopardy of this, that police officers can be called to duty at any time.

But that has to be checked and balanced because you can't just, carte blanche, say, 'Well, we're just going to pay you less'. We absolutely know what will happen and you can predict it... they'll just start calling people in on a whim and we can't say no.

Those rest days should really be enshrined and not touched because that's the time when officers do decompress, they do spend time away from thinking about the pressures and the strains at work, or the trauma that they've seen or had to deal with, or the victims

Some of the other things that we're asking for in the PFEW's submission also make absolute sense.

For example, the short notice shift change allowance, which suggests that if a shift is changed with less than 90 days notice there would be a payment made to the officer. These short notice changes shouldn't be happening under Regulation 22, but we know they do.

This recommendation would certainly make forces think twice before they start moving people around, because there's would be a financial implication for them.

Making Our Voices Heard

In March we were in Westminster meeting MPs from our county. It was really positive and was a great chance to talk about some of the campaigns that we have, such as the time



limits campaign and the mandatory recording of suicides campaign.

It was really well received by the MPs, there was a lot of dialogue there. It's going to lead to some further meetings and we'll be looking to do it again in the future.

MPs need to hear from the rank and file. They need to hear from our membership, including our views on intended changes in the Government's White Paper on police reform.

There are proposals that cause us some

concern – such as the Licence to Practise. Until we receive the detail of that it's very difficult to know how it would impact officers. My other big concern is officers being given the time to conduct the training to maintain this licence to practise.

Our employment status is unique in that we're not employees and we have none of the rights of an employee, so to try and mirror things that go on in other sectors is quite dangerous.

In terms of the plans to merge forces, I think one overarching thing I'm getting from my members is, bigger isn't always better, in terms of when it comes to the make-up of forces.

Certainly my members are really keen to stress that community policing is the bedrock of policing in Cheshire, and we are concerned that, if we were swallowed up by more metropolitan forces into a super force, we would lose some of that local interaction.



FALLING APART? IS IT TIME TO MOVE ON?



Kirsten Bennett
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Highlight Of The Police Year



Mark Roberts
Chief Constable
Cheshire Police

was incredibly proud to be invited again by the Federation to this year's bravery awards and delighted that it is becoming an annual event.

that's 'what we do' as police officers. Yes, it is our job, but it takes a special kind of person to place yourself in what can be very dangerous situations to protect others.

We see acts of courage and bravery each and every day, taking many different forms: be it running towards dangerous criminals, willingly risking physical danger to help those in crises, or shouldering the emotional burden of supporting traumatised victims.

These acts and your actions help to not only

numbers on a page.

I am very proud that this is not the case in Cheshire; we all understand that behind those figures are people who need our help and support and we do this by taking positive action against criminals and getting justice served.

Each year through your efforts we make Cheshire safer and each year we put more criminals behind bars – that doesn't happen without commitment, courage and compassion.

“Seeing such bravery along with equalled compassion from all officers really is something to behold”

It is fast becoming one of my favourite events of the year, seeing such bravery along with equalled compassion from all officers really is something to behold.

Almost everyone nominated on the evening said that they were just doing their job and

reassure those impacted by crime, but also increase the public's confidence in our policing.

Phenomenal Performance

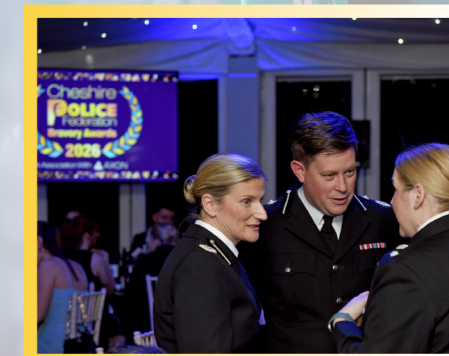
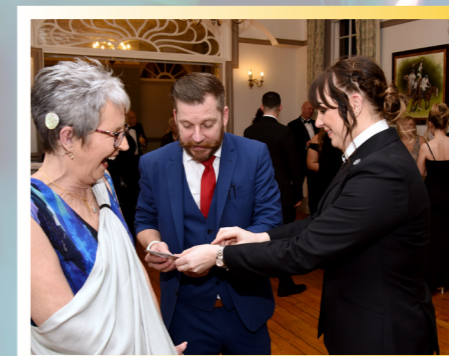
This past year we have seen some phenomenal performance, which is very easy to reduce to

I am immensely proud to lead Cheshire Constabulary, just as you are proud to be part of such a high-performing, proactive and professional force that collectively makes such a difference to people's lives.

Thank you for all that you do.



We held our second annual Cheshire Police Federation Bravery Awards on Thursday 12 March, honouring 17 officers who have made an outstanding contribution to the force. Our wonderful winners were joined by distinguished guests at the spectacular Nunsmere Hall, where we revealed who would represent Cheshire at the National Police Bravery Awards in July. Read their incredible stories in the following pages.





River Rescue Heroes

Three officers courageously pulled a woman from a river in treacherous conditions, saving her life.

Late in the evening of 30 November 2025, PC Thomas Pye, PC Alex Hill and PC Adam Keenan were deployed to a bridge over the River Mersey in Warrington, where a woman had been seen going into the fast-flowing water.

PC Pye recalled: "I thought, this needs to be immediate, especially with the time of year and it being so cold. The first thing I did was go into

the water. As the woman came into view, she was facing down in the water. Then her head dipped under the water and we lost sight of her for a moment. Alex made the decision to wade into the water to try to grab hold of her."

PC Hill takes up the story: "I come from a search and rescue background, so I've done lots of training in rivers, I know the risks involved, and I knew that stretch of the Mersey was a really dangerous place. If we hadn't gone in when we did, and took the actions we

guided back to the bank. PC Pye was also in the water, and along with PC Keenan he helped bring the woman back to the land.

PC Keenan said: "Although there was a high risk from Alex as he jumped in, I knew that if he started to go, I was probably able to wade in a little and grab him, with Tom there as well. With the addition of the throw line and me having stable footing, it was quite successful. In the chaos of everything, luck was on our side."

PC Hill said: "At this point she was breathing,

"In the chaos of everything, luck was on our side"

the boot of my car and get a throw line out, in preparation.

"I could see the woman and she was crying for help; she couldn't swim. I shouted: 'We're coming for you, lie on your back'. I could see the current was taking her downstream. That part of the Mersey is notorious for having a fast-flowing current.

"I was running down towards the railway bridge, where I could get a better vantage point to throw the line. I could hear Alex and Adam running behind me and there were flashlights from all of us just trying to keep an eye on the

did, it probably would have been a different outcome, because there was nowhere further downstream we could attempt a rescue. It was the only opportunity we had.

"I saw her face down and that was really concerning. I didn't even get the chance to take my vest off, and that's a risk because of the weight of our kit. I went in just above waist height, and it was freezing cold – it was probably the least ideal rescue we could have performed, but the only one that we had available, really."

The three officers formed a chain and PC Hill grabbed the woman, using the throw line to be

but not conscious. Dragging her up from the bank was really, really difficult."

Firearms officers had joined them on the bank and were worried the woman was in the early stages of hypothermia, so PC Pye gave her his police coat while other officers grabbed a foil blanket from the car. An ambulance arrived and took the woman to Warrington Hospital, where she made a full recovery.

PC Pye said: "In that situation your mind just goes into survival mode, you know there's someone who needs your help. It was a great outcome."



Horrific Screwdriver Attack

Two officers tackled an aggressive suspect who stabbed one of them with a screwdriver.

At around 10pm on 27 June 2024, PC Chris Walker and PC Lewis Hand were on patrol in Warrington when a CCTV operator reported a man who was suspected to be selling drugs from a bicycle.

When the officers arrived at the scene, they told the suspect to get off his bike and were able to contain him between a building and

due to the man's size and the fact he was under the influence of drugs, he continued to try to run. The man then grabbed a screwdriver from his pocket and stabbed it at PC Walker's chest four times.

PC Walker was wearing body armour, but he said it was a close call: "He hit the very top of my body armour; five millimetres above that and it would have gone under my throat, near the clavicle."

The man continued to aggressively fight both

the weight of both officers on him. The officers then took him to the floor a second time and, although he continued to resist, they finally managed to handcuff him.

PC Walker recalled: "We were starting to get really tired, because we've been fighting in body armour, taken by surprise. He's full of drugs, and we're not, so we're having to rely on our level of fitness, and that's when Lewis gets the second cuff on. When you hear the sirens, and your mates are coming, it's everything."

"We were lying in the road and the bus stopped two feet from us"

the response car. The man was of a large stature and appeared to be on drugs. He was clearly agitated, avoiding eye contact, and kept nervously touching his right pocket despite repeated commands not to.

The officers told the man he was detained for a search, and they took his backpack away. PC Hand took hold of the man's arm, and at this point the man became aggressive, punching PC Hand in the chest, which made him fall backwards. The man attempted to run away.

PC Walker grabbed hold of him and attempted to hold him against the railings, but

PC Walker and PC Hand, and by this point they were all in the middle of a busy road with traffic on both sides and a bus approaching at speed.

The officers took the man to the floor and used their body weight to control him, however the man continued to resist and was hitting and kicking out, injuring PC Walker's shin.

PC Walker said: "We were lying in the road and the bus stopped two feet from us, because it had come over the brow of the hill, not seen us and slammed on the brakes."

The man showed so much resistance that he was able to stand up again and fight, even with

The backup officers arrived at the scene and secured the suspect in the back of a police van. In the man's backpack, officers found knives, scissors, screwdrivers and items adapted to be weapons, including a five-inch blade attached to a pen. The man was also found in possession of crack cocaine and heroin, and he had two screw-drivers on his person.

He later admitted possession with intent to supply crack cocaine and heroin, possession of a bladed article in public, assaulting an emergency worker and obstructing a police officer. He was jailed for 36-months.

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Cruel Car Crash Attack

Two officers were injured when their police car was deliberately hit by another vehicle.

On 7 June 2025, PC Lauren Taylor and PC David Bowyer received a concern-for-safety call about a disturbed man, and were asked to drive to Haslington.

PC Taylor recalled: "We were driving and everything seemed normal, and then we were hit head-on by an oncoming vehicle from the other side of the carriageway."

PC Taylor said: "Instantly, I knew my arm was broken. It didn't look like an arm, it was flapping in my face. I was definitely in pain and I couldn't get out."

"And then I went to grab my radio, but that had also been flung off. I thought, 'Oh God, this is not good'. The car was smoking, and my immediate thought was: 'Oh no, this is going to blow', because I just couldn't get out."

PC Bowyer was not as badly injured, so he stayed in the car with PC Taylor, reassuring

Taylor out of the wreckage. She said: "They're the heroes here. They came and helped me, they were there straight away. I'm so thankful to them. It's lucky I'm only 5ft 1in tall, as the footwell was caved in on my driver side."

PC Bowyer said: "My main concern was making sure Lauren was okay, and that's all I cared about. Just making sure my colleague was alright, because she's not just a colleague, she's a friend."

PC Taylor was carried to a nearby ambulance

"We didn't even have a chance to defend ourselves"

PC Bowyer said: "At the last second, the car just swerved in front of us. It happened so quickly, but for me, it was like it happened in slow motion. I just thought, 'We're done for here'. Then there was an almighty bang and it felt like the car went in the air. I don't know if it did or not. Apparently I pushed the red button and my body-worn video went on, but I don't recall doing it."

Amazingly, the man they had been looking for was behind the wheel; the combined impact speed was estimated to be about 80mph and the police car was crushed.

her and calling an ambulance, but not moving her as he was concerned about her arm. A member of the public then came to help and dragged PC Bowyer out of the car.

PC Bowyer said: "When I walked into the road, I had a look at our car and saw it was absolutely smashed to bits."

"And then I looked over at the person in the black car and he gave me a look. It's hard to describe, but it stuck with me. I just knew then that it wasn't an accident."

Police colleagues arrived along with an air ambulance and the fire service, who cut PC

and her colleagues told her that the driver had smashed into them deliberately. She said: "I just couldn't get my head around it, because we'd gone to help him. We didn't even have a chance to defend ourselves."

The suspect later admitted various charges including causing serious injury by dangerous driving and drug driving. He was jailed for four years and six months.

PC Taylor fractured the radius and ulna in her right forearm, broke a finger and had extensive bruising across her body and face. She was so badly injured she was off work for six months.



Lifesaving Bridge Rescue

An officer was single-crewed when she pulled a vulnerable man off a motorway bridge.

On 20 June 2025, PC Kerrie Evans attended a report of a man standing on the wrong side of motorway bridge railings near Chester.

She blocked the road with her police van, then went to the bridge and tried to talk the man down. "But there was no talking him down," she said.

"I remember him saying that he's got nothing.

him and pulled him over, and I took most of the weight."

PC Evans recalled: "I was thinking that if I don't do this now, he might not die, but he's going to have broken bones and horrendous injuries, because there's no traffic below."

After the officer managed to get the man over the railings, he started to have a seizure.

She said: "I was putting my fingers in his mouth to stop him biting his tongue and I was just talking to him, telling him it's going to be

PC Evans added: "I unexpectedly lost my husband last August, and I know how hard it is to feel like you are the loneliest person in the world, because I've been living it.

"So when he was telling me that he felt like he had nobody, I said: 'Look, I know how you're feeling'."

When she heard she'd won a Cheshire Police Federation award, PC Evans said: "I never expected anything like this, because I thought I've just done my job. I would do it for anybody.

"I want to care for people, I want to be there for them"

He told me that he'd taken a load of medication and he was just waiting for his legs to go.

"Then I noticed that his legs started buckling. There was about 50cm between me and him, and I said: 'I can't hear what you're saying. The motorway is too loud. I'm not going to touch you, but can I come closer so I can hear you?'."

"He didn't object. So I didn't put my hands out, but I got closer and closer.

"And then his legs buckled and he closed his eyes and I grabbed his backpack and pulled him backwards.

"Two members of the public also grabbed

okay. Meanwhile, my radio was going mad. I told the control room: 'I am single crewed. There's nobody here. Can somebody else come and help me, please?'."

When the man came round from the seizure, PC Evans recalled: "We got talking and we were having a good chat, sat on the floor. And then that's when the cavalry arrived, everybody turned up.

"We popped him in the back of the van to wait for an ambulance. And again, we were just chatting away. He was telling me about his cat. I was telling him about my cats."

"I want to care for people, I want to be there for them. I was like, this is going to go one of two ways, but we're going to go for the positive. This is going to be fine."

Cheshire Police Federation Chair Jamie Thompson said: "Kerrie acted with enormous empathy and care and with no shortage of courage that day.

"Her calmness and quick-thinking in such a dangerous and unpredictable situation saved the man from a terrible fate.

"She is a literal life saver and we are all so incredibly proud of her."



Train Track Heroics

An officer pulled a woman from a train track seconds before a high-speed train was going to collide with her.

In the afternoon of 3 October 2024, single-crewed PC Meg Gray attended a report of a woman who was intending to take her own life at a live railway track in Widnes.

As PC Gray approached the woman, the control room told her they hadn't managed to get a stop on the trains, so she knew the woman was in real danger.

literally a minute before that train was due.

"But the woman was just completely focused on the train. I thought, 'Oh, it's now or never, I'm going to have to grab her'. I knew the train was going to be coming at us full force.

"So I grabbed her arm and her shoulder and pulled her back. I think she was screaming, 'Let me die', and I was just saying, 'No, no, no, you're not'.

"If I'd have just pulled her maybe a little bit the wrong way or she'd have got free, she'd have

second train, not so much, because it slowed down and then stopped.

"The driver said: 'Would you like me to pass the message to put a stop on the line?', and I was like, 'Yes!'."

PC Gray shouted on her radio for back-up and a police colleague arrived; together they took the woman away from the tracks and sectioned her under the Mental Health Act for her own safety.

When she heard she had received a

"I can remember the force of the train, it comes at you full throttle"

PC Gray recalled: "I was trying to approach her, but she was backing away, closer to the tracks. And then I saw train lights in the distance, and thought, 'Oh my God, that's coming towards us'.

"I said to the control room, 'What time is the next train?', and even on my body-worn video, you can see me taking my phone out of my pouch to check what time it is. And it was

jumped straight in front of that train."

PC Gray succeeded in pulling the woman off the tracks, and in a matter of seconds two high-speed trains rushed past them. But the woman was still trying to push away from the officer and get back onto the tracks.

PC Gray said: "I can remember the force of the train going past, it just comes at you full throttle, and how the wind hit my face. The

Federation award, PC Gray said: "I couldn't believe it, I was shocked."

Cheshire Police Federation Chair Jamie Thompson said: "Meg acted immediately and courageously in this precarious situation. She placed herself in direct danger, displaying remarkable bravery, composure and selflessness. Her intervention undoubtedly saved the woman's life."



Group's Gas Leak Rescue

A PC and four Special officers saved an unresponsive man from a gas-filled house.

In the early morning of 6 April 2025, PC Alex Hill, Special Sergeant Ian Bailey, Special Sergeant Rachel McKinlay, Special Sergeant Caroline Jenkins and Special Constable Craig Hayden attended a concern for welfare call about a man who was threatening to take his own life.

S/Sgt Bailey recalled: "There were two

to the rear of the property, making sure nobody else was in there, and as I entered the kitchen, I found that all four gas burners were on, not ignited. I quickly turned those off.

"S/Sgt Jenkins and PC Hill were trying to lift the man out and, between the three of us, we got the man onto the pavement outside. He was thankfully breathing, albeit he was unresponsive. We then just entered into first aid mode. My colleague called for an ambulance and also for the fire brigade to attend because

PC Hill said he was grateful for the experience of the Special Constables: "They consistently perform to a really high standard. I couldn't ask for a better team of Specials to attend, really. They're a cracking team that I've worked with before on multiple different jobs. And from a team cohesion perspective, I don't think it could have gone better."

When S/Sgt Bailey heard the team were nominated for a Federation award, he said: "It was a fabulous surprise, it was very much out

"From a team perspective, I don't think it could have gone better"

double-crewed Special patrols on that night. We were just leaving a job when the welfare call came in. We were two miles away, so we got there quickly and were closely followed by PC Hill. We arrived at the mid-terrace house, but there was no answer at the front door when we knocked.

"We looked through the letterbox, and there was quite a significant smell of gas coming from within the property.

"The front door was unlocked, so S/Sgt Jenkins and PC Hill entered the lounge and found a man unresponsive on the couch. I went

of the explosion risk."

Both S/Sgt Bailey and SC Hayden are nurses by profession, and PC Hill is a public order medic, so they did everything they could to look after the man.

The officers were also concerned for the welfare of the neighbours. PC Hill said: "You could smell the gas on the street, so a couple of us stayed with the man, and the rest of us knocked on the neighbours' doors to make them aware that we might have to get them out quickly, to get ready to evacuate, given the gas."

of the blue. It's an honour to be nominated. I don't think any of us Special Constables would wish to take any more glory for the job than any of our regular colleagues.

"At the end of the day, we choose to do this for the right reasons, and to work alongside our regular colleagues and not to be seen any differently is a pleasure in itself."

Cheshire Police Federation Chair Jamie Thompson said: "Well done to this brave group of officers – their teamwork, decisiveness and courage prevented a potential tragedy as well as a wider danger to the community."



Harrowing Detective Case

An officer who spent 18 months building a case that helped put an abusive husband behind bars has won the Detective of the Year Award.

DC Kieran Marsh was the officer in charge of a case where a man was suspected of raping and coercively controlling his wife. DC Marsh engaged in a multi-agency problem-solving approach around the family, and worked hard to build the victim's trust.

DC Marsh worked with the initially reluctant

and referred to the CPS for charge on the Threshold Test. But charges were declined and the suspect went on to further harass and intimidate the victim while on bail.

Following a further arrest, CPS authorised a charge for five counts of rape, controlling and coercive behaviour, and two counts of perverting the course of justice.

The suspect was remanded in custody to safeguard the extremely vulnerable victim. When the case went to court, the man was

"I've been involved in that family's life now for 18 months. And now our bit's done, but her bit's not done because she's still got to learn to live with this. So it's an abrupt end to working with someone for so long, trying to get the result for them. And it's trusting other agencies to help her out and take it forward."

When he heard he was receiving a Federation award, DC Marsh said: "I was taken aback – I wasn't expecting it, because it's what we're paid to do, isn't it? And unfortunately

"The jail sentence did feel like a big achievement"

victim reassuring her to engage with the court process, providing reassurance so she felt comfortable to provide police with the evidence to arrest and remand the suspect.

DC Marsh said: "It was a lot of patience, and just keeping in touch, intervening when we could intervene, talking to social services and giving them as much information as we could while we couldn't act."

The man was arrested in early 2025

sentenced to 13 years in prison.

DC Marsh said: "During the court process, the victim was very thankful for the support. The jail sentence did feel like a big achievement, but it's also a bit bittersweet, because the woman has got to pick up the pieces.

"But I was very happy with the conviction. And speaking to the woman recently and hearing about her outlook changing was as big a reward as the sentence.

it's a horribly familiar situation. But I was a bit emotional, really."

Cheshire Police Federation Chair Jamie Thompson said: "Kieran worked incredibly hard on this case, building a strong rapport with the victim and not giving up on getting justice for her.

"It was a difficult 18 months, but he helped to achieve a great result in court, and succeeded in safeguarding a family."



Live Motorway Drama

The overall winner of the Cheshire Police Bravery Awards 2026 is PC Phil Burgess.

PC Burgess fearlessly ran into live motorway traffic, narrowly dodging HGVs, to rescue a man in mental health crisis.

At around 10am on Saturday 14 June 2025, PC Burgess was single-crewed as he attended a report of a vulnerable man who had walked onto the M53 motorway.

PC Burgess recalled: "I saw the man on the

and used his name. But he was walking away from me, towards the traffic. Both of those lanes were still live, and I remember seeing a really fast HGV driving past.

"When you're on a motorway, everything feels very fast and very, very scary. And then I just remember seeing an opportunity where the lane closest to me was empty and I approached him, quite hurriedly at this point. I figured I'd just grab him before he runs out, and hope that people see us and don't hit us."

bravely jumped out of their cars and helped with the arrest. PC Burgess said: "I do owe them a great deal of gratitude."

The arrested man later went to court and received a suspended sentence.

He added: "My girlfriend was pregnant at the time... I was able to come away from it safely... and was able to see my son."

PC Burgess said he wasn't expecting to be nominated for an award for the events that day.

He said: "I did what a member of the public

"When you're on a motorway, everything feels very fast and very scary"

motorway, and my primary concern was: 'I need to get to him and make sure he's safe. He's not in a great place mentally, and he's potentially going to do something that is going to either kill him or potentially kill other road users.'

The man was standing in the central reservation, having already crossed two lanes of the motorway. PC Burgess decided to stop his police car over two lanes of traffic, as a rolling roadblock to bring cars to a halt.

He said: "I jumped out of the car, shouted towards the man, tried to get him to engage

PC Burgess got the man in a bear hug and tried to get him back to the central reservation, but the man put up a fight. They fell to the ground and the man struggled, striking PC Burgess several times, but the officer managed to get handcuffs on him.

He said: "Had he been a bit stronger, there was a risk that he could have pushed me back into the live lane of traffic, and that'd just be history."

PC Burgess pushed his emergency button and managed to tell the control room where he was. Meanwhile two members of the public

would expect to see in that moment. I did what I would expect my colleagues to do. A man was in dire need of help, and I was in the right place at the right time."

Cheshire Police Federation Chair Jamie Thompson said: "This was bravery of the highest order.

"Phil's decisive and selfless actions that day demonstrated exceptional personal courage and prevented a likely fatality. We are all very proud of his brave actions."

PC Burgess will represent Cheshire Police at the National Police Bravery Awards in July.

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Tributes To Much-Missed PC



All at Cheshire Police Federation are devastated by the off duty death of PC Alice Mayo, on Saturday 7 February. She was 29.

Alice was an officer from Macclesfield who served with Cheshire Police for more than six years.

Alice's family said: "Alice meant so much to so many. She was a daughter, a sister, an auntie, a niece, a dog-mum to Ned the Cocker Spaniel, and a friend to so many.

"She was beautiful inside and out. She will leave a huge hole in our lives, but also a legacy of laughter, fun, and sunshine.

"She achieved so much in her short life, and leaves behind a heartbroken, but incredibly proud, family."

Jamie Thompson, Chair of Cheshire Police Federation, said: "Our thoughts are with Alice's family, friends and close colleagues at this time.

"She will be remembered as a popular colleague who will be much missed by all who knew her. The Federation are doing all we can to support her colleagues and if any officers need assistance then please do not hesitate to contact us or a local Representative."

Alice died following a road traffic collision in the Cheshire village of Arclid on Saturday 7

February, which remains under investigation.

A 77-year-old man who was arrested on suspicion of causing a death by dangerous driving has since been released on conditional bail pending further enquiries.

Mark Roberts, Chief Constable of Cheshire Police said: "I want to pay tribute to our professional and courageous colleague. She was a dedicated professional who will be missed by all those who knew her.

"I would ask that people do not speculate about the collision and the circumstances around it. Please let our experienced and professional investigators carry out their work."

'We Don't Choose Our Shift

Changes Alphabetically'

Cheshire Constabulary's Resource Management Unit (RMU) is vital for the smooth-running of the force, ensuring that officers are effectively deployed – but there are many myths surrounding its work.

The department is responsible for making sure that key policing functions are staffed correctly. It moves resources around, makes sure officers are in the right place at the right time, and that there are enough people on duty.

There are 19 planners in the RMU: three supervisors, and an Inspector and Chief Inspector, who look after roughly 3,000 rosters across the whole force.

Most officers engage with this process through the Duty Management System (DMS). The RMU can view when people are rostered for their shifts, then apply a set of criteria for 'minimum demand'.

Cheshire Beat spoke to a senior RMU spokesperson, who explained: "Response policing is one of the more complicated areas. It has an hour-by-hour demand of how many officers we need on duty at one particular time.

"For the northern area, for example, we'll look at the minimum demand, how many we need and how many people are scheduled to work.

"We'll know how many people work

on A block response, but people have flexible working patterns, people might be sick, people might have a moderation (for instance they might have broken their arm). People might want annual leave, people might be on a training course, so everybody who works on A block response might not be in today.

"So we need to make sure there are enough officers on duty against the minimum demand, and find them from somewhere else if need be."

As well as the response team, other key functions include the Area Investigation Team (AIT), the custody suite, and roads policing.

The firearms unit is an exception: the RMU does not manage its staffing, apart from roster requirements such as annual leave.

Rosters are published a year and a month in advance, the spokesperson explained: "We start looking that far in advance, to give as much notice as we can to officers and scale in advance."

For all events, the RMU tries to give a minimum of 90 days' notice. The force's Operations Planning plans large events including Chester Races, Op Jingles (the force's annual Christmas campaign) and Creamfields, and asks RMU for the staffing requirements.

Myth #1: RMU Scales Alphabetically
Understandably, officers can be frustrated if their shifts are changed, but not everyone understands how carefully the RMU plans abstractions and tries to make it fair for everyone.

The spokesperson said: "If we don't have enough officers on response, the escalation process is to go to the AIT, and then we look to neighbourhood beat policing.

"People can feel a bit aggrieved by these abstractions, because they're being taken away from their normal duties to cover something else.

"But complaints have reduced recently, as we've implemented a few new systems in the RMU. We monitor the abstractions from AIT and beat into response, so we can review how frequently they're happening, and make sure there's a balance of those abstractions across teams.

"We look at how often one officer has been used in a month to make sure we're

spreading it equally, because a lot of people say things like: 'You scale alphabetically'.

"They think someone called Aaron Ainsworth would be picked for everything because he's got a name at the beginning of the alphabet! That's absolutely not the case.

"When we scale and pick officers, it's based on things like the shift they've worked the day before, the shift that we require them to work, how many officers are on duty with them, if someone's got a flexible working pattern, whether they're scaled for something specific that day, whether there's a moderation on anybody in your team.

"This narrows down the people we can use. Now, it's not an infallible system, it can happen that occasionally somebody does get used a little bit more.

"So we've got a method in place now that we call a heat map. We tell planners: 'You've used officer A twice, whereas you haven't used this officer at all', and the planners can think, 'Oh okay, this month I need to avoid

that officer, because I've used them twice or three times last month'. It's a very thought-out process and we do monitor it."

Myth #2: Decisions Are Money Driven
The spokesperson said: "On bank holidays, we run with lower staffing because there's more of a cost involved, but people think a lot of what we do in here is just about money and finance, and it's not.

"If we ran a week of bank holiday staffing, the amount of work that response officers would have to do in a day, they'd be pulled from pillar to post, they'd be fatigued. So it's about making sure there's the right numbers, for the benefit of everybody.

"It's not just the service delivery, it's not just about saving money and financial gain to the force. It's about delivering daily policing that is achievable and sustainable."

Myth #3: RMU Blocks Days Off
The spokesperson explained: "When we

refuse annual leave, it's not because we don't want that person to have the day off, it's about being fair to everybody.

"We may have denied your annual leave request because it drops demand below what is needed between 3am and 7am. If we've dropped demand below and had to extend another member of staff, we've impacted one individual to allow another to have the day off.

"Officers look at the Duty Analytics system and think: 'We're one over demand, I can have the day off'.

"But if we grant that, the closer we get to the day somebody might call in sick and it drops your team under minimum demand, so we're going to have to extend a tour of duty or we're going to have to deviate a shift of an officer to make sure everybody's safe."

The spokesperson said that it's best for officers to plan ahead when they book their annual leave, especially when it comes to busy times like the summer, Christmas and the end of March, when people are trying to use up their days.

"The usual rule is that for every six officers on duty, one is allowed to take annual leave. There are rare exceptions when that shrinks to one in 10.

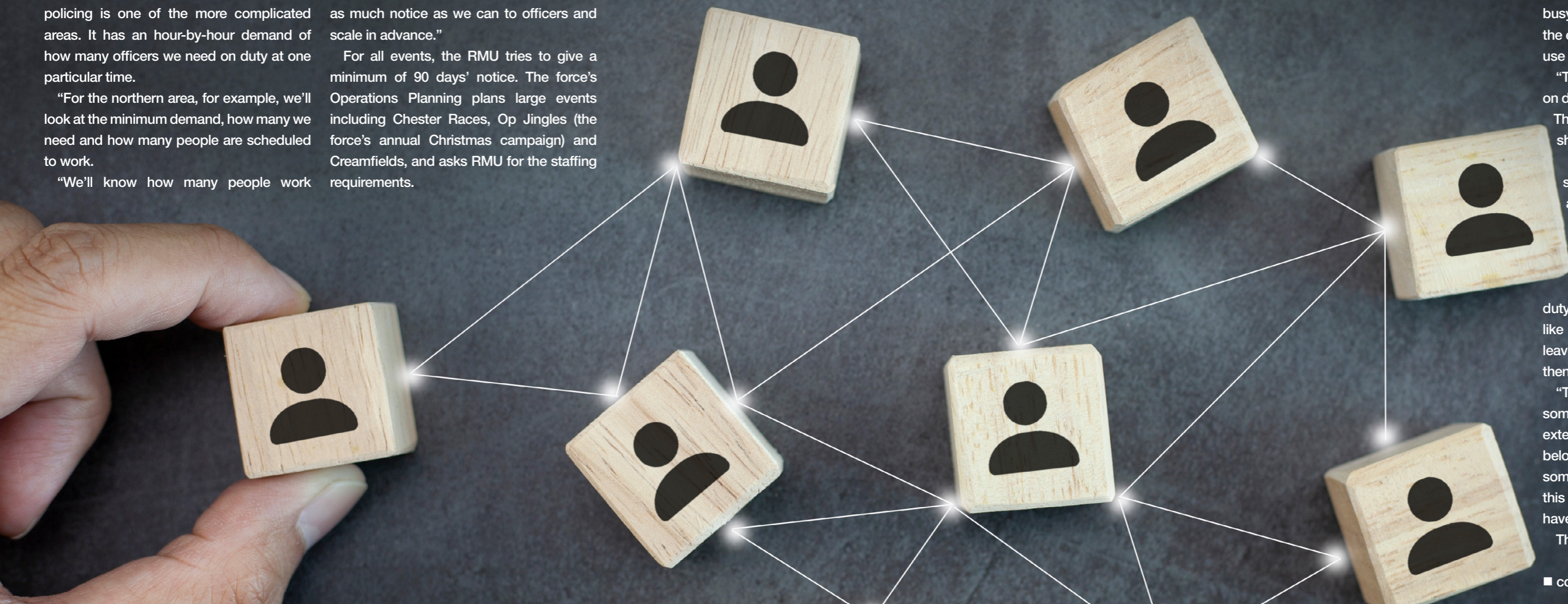
They said: "It works on a first come first serve basis, up until we get to one in six, and then we do have to start declining it, because we strip the tolerance out of the roster.

"When we grant annual leave over one in six, it brings the numbers on duty closer to minimum demand. If things like sickness, moderation, or dependency leave occur when we are at minimum, we then have to take action.

"That usually involves changing someone's role, deviating a shift, or extending a tour of duty. If the fully shift is below demand, rather than just part of it, we sometimes advertise for paid overtime, but this has to be balanced because we don't have infinite pots of money."

They added that Creamfields was a

■ continued on page 24



■ continued from page 23

special case – if people want to have that week off they need to apply early, and people are assessed on the basis of whether they have worked at Creamfields in previous years.

Myth #4: RMU Fiddles The System

The spokesperson said someone had mentioned that the RMU ‘cooks the books’ so it doesn’t look like there are as many

abstractions, but this is another myth.

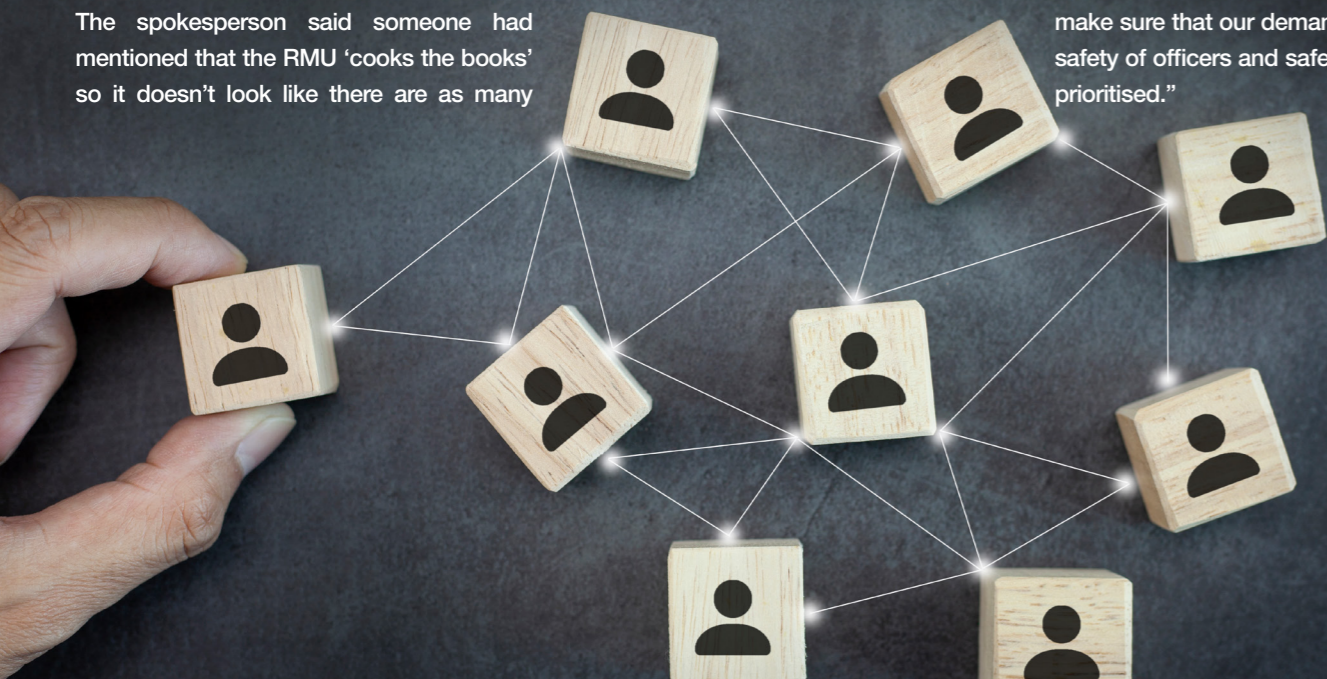
They explained: “There’s a difference between pre-planned abstractions, which are planned by the RMU, and ad-hoc abstractions.

“When it’s done ad hoc, the response inspector will walk over to an officer and say: ‘There’s an emergency call, off you go

now’. With those, we say that if they last over four hours, it counts as an abstraction.

“But somebody said we were fiddling the system and scaling people for three hours, 59 minutes, because then it doesn’t count as an abstraction.

“That’s a myth that we robustly refute. It’s absolutely not true. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. We overestimate the figures to make sure that our demand is right, so that safety of officers and safety of the public is prioritised.”



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Talking Through Problems

Male officers who are struggling with their mental health are encouraged to attend the 4092 Men’s Talk Group, which takes place every month at the Cheshire Police Federation HQ.

The group was set up in memory (and references the collar number) of Cheshire dog handler PC Steve Powell, known as Powelly, who tragically took his own life in September 2023.

A number of officers have raised funds to support the 4092 Men’s Talk Group and it has received a big push from the Federation’s new Wellbeing and Equality Lead, Anna Galloway.

The group was originally set up and facilitated in 2024 by police staff member David Cain. For 20 years, David was a senior manager in the automotive industry, but his mental health deteriorated to the point where he was struggling with PTSD, depression and thoughts of suicide.

After leaving his job and seeking help, David retrained as a mental health in the workplace specialist and now helps organisations look after their employees’ mental health in real and meaningful ways. He also works for Cheshire Police’s force control centre (FCC), so has a real insight into the challenges police staff and officers face.

David said: “I’m not medically trained, I don’t profess to be, and I will always signpost to a psychologist or another professional when I think that that is what is required, but what I can do is I can empathise. I can tell real stories. I can give people perspective.”

Positive Changes

David is pleased that more officers will be able to access help via the monthly sessions. He said that, in previous sessions, members of the group were struggling with stress, depression and anxiety, and some felt they were not getting enough support at work. But over the course of the sessions he could see many of the men becoming more positive.

He explained: “I always say at the start of any facilitation: ‘Can I establish what it

is that you require? Are you requiring us to listen? Or are you also requiring us to listen and to offer our advice and guidance?’.

“And that lays a platform, because some people just want you to listen, some people don’t want advice at that moment in time, for whatever reason.

“But the group can be very, very powerful. We’ve had tears, we’ve had laughter, we’ve had friendships that were formed.

“I want people to know that this is a safe space. It’s an open space. It’s confidential. It’s a sanctuary.

“What goes on in that room stays in that





PC Steve Powell



show the world the best version of yourself, it attracts the best version of others. It can be very powerful, what we do.”

Taboo Subject

David said that society was still lacking in understanding what it feels like to live with a mental health condition.

He added that when organisations talked

“Men are the most susceptible to poor mental health, and that’s partly because they don’t talk.

“We still live by outdated stereotypes. A man is more likely to put a brave face on it and crack a joke, than cry with his mate and say, ‘I need your help’. And that’s been passed from generation to generation.”

David encouraged people to go along to

“We still live by outdated stereotypes. A man is more likely to put a brave face on it and crack a joke, than cry with his mate and say, ‘I need your help’. And that’s been passed from generation to generation.”

others, by being in a room where you realise that the challenges that you are facing in life are not unique to yourself.”

David continued: “As men, we don’t often talk about these things. When you hear other men talk openly about the challenges of life, it’s very empowering.

“What I tend to see in these sessions is a domino effect. If someone is brave, open and vulnerable enough to go first, everybody follows.

“And of course I’ve got my own tale to tell. So I am open about my story. I’ve been at the absolute lowest point, and now I am probably the happiest I’ve been in my adult life.

“So it’s about giving them that perspective, that hope, that drive to get better every day. And everything else in life then tends to fall into place, because if you

about mental health, there were often “too many tick boxes, too many slogans”, but that the 4092 Men’s Talk Group was about positivity and action.

He explained: “It’s mental health training and development in action. It’s about being real. It’s about opening the door, being open, being honest and providing strategies and pathways that can release people of their temporary burden.”

David may refer to the problems as a hopefully temporary issue, but he said he still has to manage his mental health.

He said: “In the group, we give strategies on how to do that on a day-to-day basis, where you can internally map how well you are doing, how well you are progressing with dealing and coping, living alongside your mental health conditions. No other group in the police force is doing this.

a group, saying: “The bravest step is always the first. And once somebody steps into that room, they will come to understand very quickly that that is perhaps one of the greatest steps they’ve ever taken in their lives.

“And my plea to people is: if your brain is telling you all the reasons not to go, you probably should go, you probably need it.

“If you are off sick because of a mental health condition, or if you are a new officer who has been to your first sudden death, and you put on a brave face to your colleagues but at home you’ve had flashbacks and nightmares, please come and open up to me about that. That’s what the group is here for.”

The sessions run every month and officers can contact their Federation Rep, or David directly at david.cain@cheshire.police.uk.



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Crucial Time Limits



Dave Howard
CAPLO
Cheshire Police Federation

practice in Cheshire, but also nationally. The Government needs to make amendments to the policing bill to make the 12-month time limit reality. It's good that we've spoken to our local MPs, as they are the best people to take things forward to the PCC on our behalf.

Chair Jamie Thompson and I recently met with six of our 11 MPs in Cheshire, and asked them to speed up the process for conduct investigations, whether it be with the Professional Standards Department (PSD) or the IOPC. They really engaged with the issue and said they would speak to our Police and Crime Commissioner, Dan Price.

I hope this will start a conversation about why these investigations are taking so long, sometimes as long as 18 months or two years. During this time, officers are suspended on taxpayers' money.

This internal review should look into what is blocking these investigations, and what the staff are coming up against, as well as whether they have enough staff in the PSD. We need to stop the unnecessarily long and unacceptable length of time that police officers are under investigation.

Setting Timescales

The Police Federation of England and Wales' campaign is for a 12-month time limit for disciplinary procedures against officers, timed from when the allegations are made. That is what I would like to happen here in Cheshire.

I understand that sometimes investigations, if they are connected to criminal investigations, can take a long time to get to court. But internal investigations shouldn't take that long when there's no criminal matters involved.

At the moment, there's no cap on how long investigations can last, and it is not clear why so many of them drag on so long.

In the Federation, we have a certain number of days to respond to a Reg 17 notice, and we can ask for an extension, but certainly no longer than a month. But there's nothing in the legislation to say that the PSD has to act within a certain period of time. There is no timescale on that.

I'd like time limits to be adhered to as best

Critical Consequences

Sadly, this all links to the fact that some police officers take their own lives when they're under investigation and at their lowest ebb. Other cops have attempted to take their own lives and we don't even know the numbers, as many forces do not have a recording mechanism for this.

Being under a lengthy investigation doesn't just affect cops, it affects their families as well. Even if the officer is found to have done nothing wrong at the end of an 18-month investigation, they will have had a very difficult 18 months.

They will have been suspended, out of the workforce, and will have missed that contact with colleagues. They're often forgotten about when they're not in a station, day in, day out.

Here in the Federation we can refer people to counselling services, and we can have a coffee and a chat with someone, but the best thing would be for investigations to be shorter.

We're also at risk of good officers leaving the service. I've had police officers who have been suspended for 12 or 18 months and have come through the process with no case to answer, but then they'll resign because they've become so disheartened with policing.

Of course, complaints do need to be investigated if there is something there. But when we are getting to the point of these things going the distance and cops being exonerated at hearings, it's then destroyed them, and we're losing experienced police officers.

If an officer reading this is under investigation and is struggling with their mental health, please do reach out to us in the Federation, as well as to your welfare support officer that is provided by the force.

There are lots of police organisations that can support you, and we can help you contact them.





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Meet The Rep: Mike Oliver

Tell us about your policing career to date.

I joined first as a Special in Grampian Police in about 2001, while I was in Aberdeen for university. I was a Special there for a couple of years. In 2006 I joined Lothian and Borders Police in their control room as a radio operator for a couple of years, then I joined as a police officer on response.

In 2012 I transferred to Cheshire – I started in Warrington town centre, went to Chester and worked in Winsford until about 2017. Then I moved from Response into the Digital Forensics Unit where I've been ever since as a Digital Forensics Investigator.

What does a Digital Forensics Investigator do?

My role is the recovery and analysis of digital data from mobile phones, computers, drones, vehicles. Anything that stores data comes through our office and it's our job to get the data off, and analyse it and interpret it for the officer that's dealing in the courts.

I'd always been interested in computers and technology.

Until I saw the vacancy, I didn't even know the role existed. So I thought that ticks the boxes of all the things I'm interested in, and so I applied got the job.



You are currently the Federation's Deputy Conduct Lead. What made you decide to specialise in that area?

I did the training initially and I've always felt if an opportunity comes, don't turn it down because you never know where it leads.

I've never been involved in that from a personal point of view, so I didn't really know much about it. As police officers, we want to know what's going on and it just gives you a different insight and a completely different

I think we're in a unique situation where we're held to a higher standard than other people and to have representation from somebody who understands that is helpful.

Certainly there are occasions where officers get into trouble, not necessarily setting out to do anything wrong. And some of the time you can look at it and think, 'that could have been me'. I can see how any one of us could end up in that situation. So I that level of empathy is certainly important.

“We're held to a higher standard than other people and to have representation from somebody who understands that is helpful”

Why did you decide to become a Federation Rep?

I think a lot of frustration over seeing things happening nationally that I wasn't necessarily happy with, around pay and conditions, and I wanted to get involved in some way.

So it seemed like the obvious thing to do is get involved and see how those kind of things can be influenced and what changes we can make.

You can't really complain about it if you're not willing to put yourself out there and try and do something about it.

I'd never really had any contact with the Federation so I didn't really know fully what the role involved, but I thought we'll give it a go, see if I can get the position and if I did, how it suited me and if it was something I'd enjoy.

angle to support police officers that have been investigated.

I've had a degree of that in my job in digital forensics in that we do sometimes get jobs come through from PSD to download phones or computers of officers that have been investigated. I thought, let's have a look at the other side of it, supporting the officers and seeing what the process is when someone's being investigated.

I found it's quite a structured process that I enjoy. I like taking complicated ideas and trying to distil them down into comprehensive, easy to understand reports. I think I've taken to it quite well.

Why is it important for members to have fellow officers as their Federation reps?

If officers need help they should contact the Federation office so they can allocate it to the person with the right skillset and the person who's got the capacity.

Can you tell us an unusual fact about yourself?

I worked on mutual aid for the 2012 Olympics, two months after my son was born. At the time, I was a police officer in Scotland, so we had to be sworn in as constables in England to be able to fulfil the role. We got to have a look around the Olympic Park.

We were doing security for the Olympic Village and we got to go in a few of the Olympic venues. It was the most good-natured policing experience I've ever had and it was absolutely brilliant. It was just a happy time for the country.

Ear Pieces' Hearing Risk

Hearing damage is permanent, and we need urgent action to ensure equipment and practices don't put officers' health or careers at risk.

That was the reaction of Cheshire Police Federation Chair Jamie Thompson after new research found more than 45% of ear piece-wearing officers reported experiencing signs of temporary hearing loss immediately after using an ear piece.

The University of Manchester researchers also found that ear piece use accompanied by immediate after-effects more than doubled an officer's risk of having tinnitus, and raised the risk of having diagnosed hearing loss by 93%.

The symptoms were much more common in the ear with the ear piece than the opposite ear, increasing the likelihood that hearing problems were directly linked to use of the devices.

Laboratory hearing tests are now needed to confirm whether ear piece users have measurable differences between their ears.

Inspector Andrea Shoetan, president of the Disabled Police Association, said that ear pieces were being worn more than ever.

She said: "As a serving officer of 20 years, the use of ear pieces has changed dramatically within that time due to the introduction of body-worn video cameras."

Insp Shoetan said officers work in noisy environments and have to turn up their ear pieces as a result.

She said: "The volume of the radio will be turned up to maximum with sound going straight into the ear canal from the ear piece to try and hear radio communications, so the potential risk of exceeding daily noise levels increases."

Jamie said: "These findings are highly worrying. Safeguards right now rely mostly on officers keeping the volume of their ear pieces low, but that is not a practical long-term solution."

"Forces should apply hearing checks more regularly, as at the moment it appears

reactionary and inconsistent.

"If officers are worried, they should report symptoms immediately to their supervisor and their Federation Rep. Hearing damage is permanent, and we need urgent action to ensure equipment and practices don't put officers' health or career at risk."



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Award For Museum Volunteers

Volunteers who help run the Cheshire Museum of Policing, based in Warrington's Arpley Street building, were presented with their King's Award for Voluntary Services during a special ceremony at Warrington town hall.

Retired Cheshire Police officer Chris Upham is Chair of the museum.

It is run by retired officers Peter Hampson and Will Brown, alongside a group of volunteers.

The museum opened in 2008 and is honours the history of Cheshire Constabulary. It exhibits photos, uniforms, vehicles and even has Victorian-era police cells.



Photo: www.warrington-worldwide.co.uk



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