I hope that you are all well and enjoying the flaming summer weather that we do not appear to be experiencing.

This edition is heavily slanted towards the last annual Federation conference in Bournemouth. I was pleased that the then very recently elected Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, Jeff Cuthbert, was able to join us for the day of the Home Secretary’s speech. It was good to meet with him so early into his tenure and I am pleased that he made clear his intentions to work with all of the representative bodies of Gwent Constabulary for the greater good of the public of Gwent affected by policing.

To align the Federation with the recommendations of the Normington report (the independent report commissioned by the Federation into itself), future conferences will reduce considerably in size and duration from next year and will also move to Birmingham in the interests of being somewhat more central than the south coast paradise that is Bournemouth.

The election procedure for representatives will move to a model that will finally enable you to have a direct vote for your local and national officials.

Much of the conference highlighted the progress made towards the implementation of the Normington review. At the end of this process, your Federation should be leaner and more frugal. It is my fervent hope and expectation that the Federation will also be more responsive to the mood of its members. I will keep you posted on the progress of these changes.

Home Secretary Theresa May dropped by conference and gave us her annual telling-off. She gave some faint praise for the efforts that have been made to change the Federation but criticised the speed of them. She paid tribute to the changes that her Government has made to policing. She also made reference to the Normington review and gave the helpful reminder that she will force legislation upon us if we falter in implementing all of the recommendations.

Change is needed. However, I am acutely aware that those of us representing smaller numbers of officers in Great Britain to police headquarters may send our way. It may well be felt necessary to reverse the decline of the numbers of officers in Great Britain to ensure that we can meet future challenges.

As I write this, the airport attack in Turkey is still in the early stages of casualty assessment and evidence gathering. I know that we have some understanding and considerable sympathy for all affected by this latest outrage; not least for our colleagues in all of the emergency services called upon to respond. Some of the footage that has already emerged evidences all too starkly the duty to serve in such circumstances that is the common bond of all who choose these occupations.

We find ourselves in dangerous and uncertain times. Much that seemed certain to us as citizens within our own united nation has recently been called into question. History teaches us that social disquiet can often lead to civil unrest. We in this service have all pledged to preserve Her Majesty’s peace. It is this service that will be called upon to deal with such threats to that peace.

To paraphrase Churchill, the events that we have witnessed may not signal the end of the Union, nor even the beginning of the end of the Union, nor even the beginning of the end of the Union. The police service must be in a position to respond to all of the potential events that this fractious period may send our way. It may well be felt necessary to reverse the decline of the numbers of officers in Great Britain to ensure that we can meet future challenges.

Sad to report that our colleague from South Wales Police, Wayne Baker, passed away recently. Wayne worked fantastically hard for us to deliver our website service to you.

Be safe and well all.

Tim Wilcox
Chairman, Gwent Police Federation

“I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it.” Voltaire.
meeting the Government’s commitment to increase the number of firearms officers by 1,500 then those volunteering to take such a huge responsibility must have confidence that they will be treated as witnesses, not suspects, when assisting with IPCC enquiries.

“Confidence that enquiries will be dealt with quickly and confidence that, should they be compelled to discharge their firearm in a split-second life or death situation, they will not automatically be arrested on suspicion of murder.”

Steve also led the tributes to the 96 families who lost loved ones at the Hillsborough disaster 27 years ago. He said the tragedy should never and will never be forgotten and led a one-minute silence to remember the victims.

He asked that the mistakes of the past not be blamed on the new generation of police officers.

And touching on cyber-crime and terrorist incidents, he said he welcomed the decision by Chancellor George Osborne not to introduce any further police cuts and his promise to provide the tools needed to do the job.

The ‘Believe in Blue’ campaign, launched earlier this year and adopted as the conference theme, was needed, he explained: “To remind the country, to remind politicians, to remind the media, and to remind the public, what a brilliant job the British police do every single day. And to ask them to stand up and believe in blue. To believe in our men and women in blue.”

He said police officers are the glue that holds communities together, explaining: “We offer the public as much help as our resources allow. But, in all honesty, that’s a massive under-statement. We are selling ourselves short. Because we do much, much more than our resources should allow. The thin blue line runs ever-thinner, resources are at a premium but it’s the police who keep going.”

He acknowledged the police must be held accountable for their actions and inactions, but that officers needed to know they would be treated fairly.

He said: “If we are to have any chance of fewer police officers means those policing are often without the quick back-up and support needed if a situation turns violent. Taser protects the public; it protects us. It even protects offenders.

However, he highlighted that crimes which are rising fastest are those that are under-reported such as online fraud and other cyber-crime and these are the kinds of crime that the police are currently least equipped to deal with.

He paid tribute to PC Sahib Lalli and PC David Phillips who both lost their lives while on duty last year and appealed to Ms May to commit to increasing the sentences of those guilty of assaulting public servants doing their job.

Calling on the Home Secretary to issue Taser more widely, he said: “No police officer should ever go to work with an expectation that they will be injured.

“Fewer police officers means those policing are often without the quick back-up and support needed if a situation turns violent. Taser protects the public; it protects us. It even protects offenders.”

He urged: “Don’t make chief officers use the already depleted police budget to roll it out. Home Secretary, please give them the extra money needed to do so. Government always finds money when it’s needed. We should not put a price on public safety.”
Home Secretary Theresa May has said more needs to be done to protect victims of abuse.

In her keynote speech on the first day of the Police Federation of England and Wales national conference, she addressed a hall of rank and file officers.

While great progress had been made in the past two years, she said there was still a long way to go as victims were still being ‘let down’ and reports are not taken seriously enough.

She said: “The right skills, training, and commitment to protect the vulnerable are still not held by every single police officer. And while the new powers that we introduced are effective, they are not being used anywhere near as systematically as they could be.

“We continue to see examples of the same shameful attitude that HMIC uncovered in 2013. We know of officers who develop inappropriate relationships with victims of domestic abuse. They have ignored their professional duty and their moral responsibility, and instead abused their position of power to exploit victims.

“We do not know the true scale of this, but everyone in this room will know it goes on far more than we might care to admit. So today I have written to Sir Tom Winsor to ask HMIC to investigate this issue during its legitimacy inspections later this year.”

Ms May touched on the Hillsborough inquest, saying the police needed ‘to face up to the past and right the wrongs that continue to jeopardise the work of police officers today’.

She said: “And let’s not forget, when we look at Hillsborough, the principal obstacle to the pursuit of justice has not been the passage of time. The problem has been that due process was obstructed and the police, the custodians of justice, failed to put justice first.”

And finally, Ms May announced she will bring forward proposals with the College of Policing to develop minimum training and standards for certain specialist roles and to give the college responsibility to enforce those standards through a system of national accreditation.

“These reforms will mean that, in future, victims can have confidence that the police will take these crimes as seriously as any other. And it will mean that you - as police officers - are not forced to take on the risk and responsibility of investigating crimes for which you have not been prepared or trained professionally,” she said.

“And if any of you still doubts whether this is possible – whether policing really can change – just look back at the last six years and consider what you have achieved.”

PCC welcomed to conference

Even though the result of the Police and Crime Commissioner election was only known just over a week before the beginning of the conference I was really pleased that the new PCC for Gwent, Jeff Cuthbert, was able to take up our invitation to attend, writes Tim Wilcox, chairman of Gwent Police Federation.

Mr Cuthbert met with our representatives attending conference informally the night before the Home Secretary’s speech.

He then joined us in the conference centre for Theresa May’s annual appraisal of our service.

The right skills, training, and commitment to protect the vulnerable are still not held by every single police officer. And while the new powers that we introduced are effective, they are not being used anywhere near as systematically as they could be.”
Shadow home secretary: I believe in blue

“I believe in blue. I believe in you and what you do.”

Those were the resounding words of shadow home secretary Andy Burnham as he addressed this year’s Police Federation conference.

Speaking to rank and file officers on the first day of the annual conference, he said: “I know that there are thousands of your colleagues out there right now as I speak putting themselves out to keep others safe.

“British policing remains the best in the world - of that I have no doubt.”

He said he was saddened to see the ‘bedrock of British policing that I am proud to say was built up by the last Labour Government’ being ‘slowly hollowed out’.

He quoted statistics of 18,000 police officers, 12,000 of them operational front-line officers, lost in the last Parliament and said those left have found their workloads soaring and pressure intensifying, with over a quarter now working more than 49 hours a week, beyond the legal limit.

He continued: “We are now in the sixth straight year of cuts to police budgets. These cuts come when the challenges of the job are greater than ever before and when the pressures on you are increasing all the time;

at a time when crime is changing, becoming more sophisticated, and starting to rise again;

when the terror threat is growing;

and when the police are increasingly being left to pick up the pieces from cuts to other public services as the service of last resort.

“So your job is getting harder and, if this wasn’t bad enough, there has been a steady stream of revelations about policing practice in the past. So morale is low and no wonder.”

Mr Burnham said he had ‘serious concerns’ about possible plans to merge with fire services and expanding the role of volunteers.

He called for reform on the treatment of bereaved families at inquests saying: “It cannot be right that police forces are able to spend unlimited sums of public money on lawyers when families, often raw with grief, are thrown into a court room with no ability to match it.”

He is also seeking to remove the time limit on the period after leaving a force that a retired officer can be investigated for misconduct.

The third area that needs change, he said, is on strengthening the independence of the regulator and he wants to give the IPCC power to direct forces to implement findings and sanctions following investigations into officers and forces.
‘Police drivers need better legal protection’

Current legislation means police response or pursuit drivers can find themselves being convicted, fined, banned and sacked just for doing their duty.

But Tim Rogers, the Federation’s national lead on police pursuits, is heading up a campaign for a change in the law to protect police drivers.

He told conference: “Emergency response drives and pursuits are still measured against the standard of the careful and competent driver. You know, the driver that doesn’t drive above the speed limit, through red traffic lights, respond to incidents?”

“In my Force, there are around 2,500 immediate response incidents each week – that’s 2,500 occasions when police drivers put themselves at risk of prosecution as they go about their duties serving the public of the West Midlands.”

And he continued: “We are not being alarmist, and I concede that prosecutions in context are few and far between. But spare a thought for Officer Few and Far Between who is mendaciously pursued through the criminal court only to be acquitted one, two, three or four years later and then told ‘you were just doing your job’.”

“We are merely pointing out what our members, chief officers, MPs and the public need to know. There is a flaw in the system, and a risk to our members - and the public.”

He added: “I am sure the public would expect police officers to use their skills and professionalism to respond as quickly as possible to a call for assistance; they do not expect us to be obstructed by legislation.”

Officers’ role, training and the expectation of society should, he argued, be considered in law given that they are trained to a standard licensed by the College of Policing.

An initial Federation campaign four years ago brought about the establishment of a NPCC steering group to consider police driving inquiries but this is no longer effective.

Tim explained: “The development was welcome, but the dynamic has now changed; fewer drivers, larger areas, longer response drives, single crewing, longer shifts. The IPCC now conducts most serious and fatal POLAC enquiries, they, of course, will not be using the NPCC steering group and I understand this.”

And he continued: “I have been involved in a few pursuits and response drives over the years, I have been trained to the College of Policing standard to do a job that chief officers, MPs and society expect of me and I expect of myself. I would be cautious to use this training now; I fear through no fault of my own becoming Officer Few and Far Between.”

More details on the difficulties faced by officers when they are treated as witnesses – making them more vulnerable - rather than suspects were explained by Mark Aldred, a barrister and former police sergeant.

“Don’t be misled into thinking the facts will speak for themselves,” he cautioned.

He explained the background of other cases where officers found themselves facing criminal charges and also introduced the change of wording being proposed: “When a vehicle is being used for fire brigade, ambulance, bomb or explosive disposal, national blood service, rescue or police purposes, or for a purpose connected with the National Crime Agency the driver may depart from the standard of the careful and competent driver (or by his driving, cause another to do so) if and only if;

a) driving the vehicle in accordance with road traffic regulations would be likely to hinder the use of that vehicle for the purpose for which it is being used and;

b) any such departure is a proportionate response to the circumstances as the responder reasonably believed them to be and;

c) the driver has undergone or is engaged in, specialist driver training in accordance with s19 of the RSA 2006. Anthony Bangham, the NPCC lead on pursuits, argued, however, that the change should only apply to pursuit not response drivers.

The Federation’s campaign for legislative change was re-launched in January this year and it is hoped it will be debated in Parliament in January 2017.

All JBBs will be written to in the coming weeks. Branches will be asked to provide their chief officers a legal summary, an update on the campaign, and ask them for their full support.

“Our Rep Says:

“I had, like most, believed that while we were exercising our duty responding to emergency calls that, in addition to an exemption to the posted speed limits, we were also afforded a heightened level of protection and exemption to the Road Traffic Act.

“The input from barrister Mark Aldred explained this is simply not the case. The standard of subjective assessment of if a driving offence had been committed is that which would be applied to an ‘ordinary’ driver applies equally to police.

“No allowance for, acceptance or defence of the higher level of driver training received or the dynamic and generic risk assessments that officers carry out continually throughout any blue light run.”

Jon Williams

I am sure the public would expect police officers to use their skills and professionalism to respond as quickly as possible to a call for assistance; they do not expect us to be obstructed by legislation.”
Taser: an essential bit of kit in preventing officer assaults

Taser needs to be rolled out to all officers who want to carry them, says John Apter, the Hampshire Police Federation chairman who has spearheaded a successful campaign to improve the way officer assaults are handled.

John told conference that body-worn cameras were a fantastic piece of equipment when it came to recording incidents but it did not prevent assaults.

“It’s a disgrace to say Taser shouldn’t be rolled out further. It is an essential piece of kit. I accept it’s expensive, but what’s the cost of the safety of officers?” he asked.

He also called for officer safety training to be standardised across all 43 forces in England and Wales and said he would raise the matter with the College of Policing.

“Policing is dangerous and unpredictable, but if you say being assaulted is part of the job then that makes it right, and it is not right,” he told delegates in his Wednesday afternoon session at conference.

He drew attention to problems in finding out accurate statistics on officer assaults, questioning the reported figure of 23,000 a year.

“If we are to deal with this issue, we need to identify how big this issue is and, believe me, it’s bigger than 23,000 assaults,” he argued, adding that while he appreciated nothing would prevent every incident, better training and better access to equipment would help.

Work needed to be done with the CPS in relation to sentencing of those found to have assaulted officers while nationwide the roll-out of Hampshire’s seven-point plan had also helped improve the support offered to victims of assaults.

John Montague, senior district Crown Prosecutor at CPS Wessex, urged delegates to build a relationship with their local CPS so cases could be better understood.

Sir Tom Winsor praises rank and file officers

Sir Tom Winsor, head of HMIC, spoke of his 'enormous respect and admiration' for rank and file police officers and the work they do every day in his speech to the Police Federation conference.

He praised their 'can do' culture and acknowledged the dangers they faced explaining that attending Merseyside PC David Phillips’ funeral last year had been one of the most moving experiences of his life and highlighting the ‘dignity in profound grief of his young family’.

Sir Tom told delegates: “David Phillips’ daughters will grow up without their father. They will be proud of their father but they will miss him every day – they will live with his memory but not his presence. This is something that everyone needs to keep front and centre of their minds as policing judgements are made.”

He referred to a question asked of the Home Secretary about her legacy, saying that this had prompted him to reflect on his own time as chief inspector at the inspectorate, particularly as he was now halfway through his term of office.

His respect and admiration for policing had only intensified, he explained.

He then went on to outline the key theme of his presentation saying that the aim of HMIC was to make front-line policing more productive and that the PEEL – police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy – inspections introduced two years ago marked the biggest ever change to force inspections.

The PEEL inspections, which rank forces as outstanding, good, requiring improvement and inadequate, involve three assessments for each of the 43 forces.

But, he announced that more needed to be done to enable forces to plan for the future. In line with utility companies, that are required to produce Network Management Statements each year to show how they are planning to meet their future demand, forces would now be compelled to prepare their own Force Management Statements annually.

The police, he pointed out, were the most important of all the services since policing affected everyone.

Demand is largely viewed as being about crime, Sir Tom said, but police dealt with far more than crime.

OUR REP SAYS:

“One of the most impactive speeches of conference. He appears to have had a complete transformation about the way he thinks and feels about police officers. He spent the first 10 minutes talking about his huge respect that he has for the rank and file and their personal bravery.

“He talked about the can do attitude when other agencies constantly fail. He sounded incredibly genuine and it felt as though we may have an ally in him in the future.”

Amanda Williams
Film reveals the effects of mental health crisis

Four officers who had experienced mental health issues talked about their experiences in a film shown to conference on the Wednesday morning.

The officers gave a powerful insight into the effects of mental illness on their lives, both personally and professionally, as part of a session called ‘How blue is the thin blue line? Police officers and mental health’.

The session relied quite heavily on academic studies, showing a significant increase in officers suffering mental health issues, but it was the stories told by these four officers – described at the outset as ‘four voices in a choir of men’ – that had the more lasting impact, particularly when one of them said of their force: “I thought they would show me more compassion.”

Che Donald, the national Federation’s lead on officer welfare and mental health, introduced the session saying forces had a statutory duty of care to officers and also pointed out that the Federation should also be on hand to support officers suffering mental health issues.

“We need to know how many officers are experiencing this and we need to know the reasons why,” he explained, saying the Federation needed to know the extent of the problem which was vital if it was to make a business case for change. “Without this, nothing will change and officers and their families will suffer.”

Professor Jonathan Houdmont from the University of Nottingham, who has worked with West Midlands Police Federation for a number of years on officer stress studies, was the first speaker to provide the statistical evidence underpinning the Federation’s calls for more support for officers suffering mental illness.

He led the Federation’s nationwide survey on officer stress and mental health in February this year which attracted 17,434 responses and highlighted some of the findings in relation to officers’ views on demand and capacity with the majority expressing concerns about staffing arrangements.

He concluded that officers were under pressure trying to balance demand and capacity to meet that demand, policing is stressful, the mental wellbeing of police officers is considerably poorer than that found in the general adult population, a large proportion of officers have sought help for mental health and wellbeing matters, there is a mixed perception of the support available and there is scope to improve the training available to line managers so they can offer support to their colleagues.

His interim survey report will be released in September this year with the full report being published in spring 2017.

The next speaker was Stephen Bevan, head of HR research development at the Institute of Employment Studies, who said there were lessons to be learned in terms of:

- Tackling cultural barriers, encouraging openness and acceptance in relation to mental illnesses
- The support available following a major trauma being generally good but the cumulative effect of a build-up of stress often being neglected
- The need for early access to support.

Steve White, national Federation chairman, with regional Federation representative Hayley Aley (centre) and Faye McGuinness of MIND’s Blue Light Programme and the Federation’s Time to Change signed pledge.
Officers need more training to support vulnerable people

Officers need better training in public protection particularly in relation to child, sexual and domestic abuse, the head of the College of Policing told conference.

And he admitted that the college also had to better connect with front-line police officers.

Hearing taken part in the Wednesday afternoon session on officer assaults, Alex Marshall, CEO, headed up a Thursday morning session dedicated to an update on the College of Policing and argued for a police Licence to Practise.

“We are pretty strict about licensing to carry firearms, for example, and those officers are checked each year but in the public protection arena and other high risk areas we are quite weak. Officers do not have a qualification in that area and do not have the protection of a licence to practise. We will look at that,” he said.

Alex pointed to a study of the demand placed on forces on a daily basis which showed that on a typical force on a typical day there were 50 arrests and 150 crime reports but it also revealed that in the public protection arena forces were typically dealing with 2,700 registered families, 1,600 domestic violence incidents, almost 1,200 registered sexual and violent offenders and 1,000 children and young people on the ‘at risk’ register, representing a massive change to the demand placed on forces.

“We know this because you have seen it happening,” he said, adding that far more people were working in public protection. But he later said that, while these were high risk working areas, there was low level support available to officers and they should not be put in these positions unless they had received adequate training.

The college, he stressed, was aiming to support the profession but wanted to do more.

He started his presentation by explaining the college’s three main strands of work – knowledge, education and standards. It gathered knowledge for evidence based decisions, guided educational requirements – and carried out some training, including an online learning programme which he conceded needed improving – and set standards for policing.

“We are here for everyone who works in policing in England and Wales,” Alex told conference, adding that it aimed to support the profession, and individuals.

He was joined for the session by Rachel Tuffin, the college’s director of knowledge, research and education, whose theme was passion, patterns and prevention. She introduced a video featuring two serving officers who talked about the benefits of developing evidence based policing methods and practices.

In the past, learning had tended to come from one-off stories, incidents which ended up with apportioning blame, but there needed to be a shift towards learning from patterns, noticing when something is going wrong, and then prevention by questioning systems and improving processes.

But, during a questions session, a Northumbria representative asked when hard-pressed officers, already struggling to fit in PDRs with their work-loads and the demands placed on them, were going to get time to get involved in this or the training packages available.

Another representative claimed the college was not in touch with rank and file officers, saying: “The college is a long way away from our front-line officers – unless you have got a rose or a crown on your shoulders. The college doesn’t have anything to do with front-line officers.”

Rachel Tuffin agreed: “It’s a fair challenge and we are trying to sort it out.”
We can tackle our bias, says psychologist

A psychologist told conference this year that bias in any workplace, including the police force, is down to the unconscious brain, or large ping pong ball.

Dr Peter Jones, who described himself as a ‘fat white bloke’, also said bias is mitigated by contact.

He explained that we are all neurologically pre-disposed to prefer people who look like us and even have similar names to our own. But he said his study and testing of 15,000 people in the UK shows that this potentially damaging behaviour can be unlearned.

“This pre-disposition can be unpicked. But the Noah’s Ark idea of two of everything doesn’t necessarily work – two black officers, two white, two gay – because, just like on the ark, the tigers will eat the lions and we will bump along rather than get along,” Peter explained.

“A workplace needs to be both diverse and inclusive. The police force has more gazelles and giraffes than a lot of other places but it needs to be inclusive to allow everyone to take part and get promotion.”

Peter said organisations are usually in three categories: low diversity and low inclusion, high diversity but low inclusion and highly diverse and highly inclusive. He said the highly diverse, low inclusion organisations, such as councils who boast of staff speaking 168 different languages, actually allow very little opportunity for promotion for those who weren’t ‘the same’.

“Highly diverse, highly inclusive workplaces, however, showed better staff performance because everyone is allowed to participate and move within the organisation.

“So it’s not just about the people – it’s about having the people and allowing them to fairly participate,” delegates were told.

He explained that people process information both consciously (slowly, rule driven and limited in resources) and unconsciously (automatically, fast and intuitively driven) at the same time.

He further pointed out: “We all make decisions every day about someone’s tie or accent but those decisions are usually made by the unconscious brain, or the large ping pong ball, because the conscious, or small ping pong ball, is too busy processing the basic planning stuff and can’t cope with any more information.

“We can get people tested so they are aware of any bias they may have. We can watch for our triggers. We can get a colleague to deal with something that we know we have an issue with. We can think about decisions and slow them down.

“The unconscious sees patterns and makes assumptions so we categorise people without even realising we’re doing it. The brain learns to fire and wire information together. This isn’t a problem most of the time until it affects the decisions someone is making about a person.

“And when you, as police officers, are tired, stressed, anxious or rushing, the unconscious takes over and those unconscious patterns are what your decisions become based on – for instance, in Stop and Search. Those informal, unimportant layers of commonality form an important bias.”

He asked: “Do we associate women with the home and men with work? And what can we do about it if we do?”

“We can get people tested so they are aware of any bias they may have. We can watch for our triggers. We can get a colleague to deal with something that we know we have an issue with. We can think about decisions and slow them down.

“Having contact with groups in the community mitigates bias, as does actively remembering people’s names within those groups. Talk about it and then walk the walk because you can’t talk about it and do nothing. Be aware of bias and measure it.

“Take your ping pong balls with you. You haven’t got to be vigilant all the time but take them out when you need them.”

That was the message on this year’s conference opening day from Mark Hinge, managing director of The Bay public affairs.

He said: “This conference will be our first look at devolution – the first time we’ll dip our toes in. The Federation is keen to develop this debate because if you think devolution is only an issue for Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, you couldn’t be more wrong.”

He went on to explain that devolution will affect policing in England and Wales in two areas which are democratic change and accountability and the impact on operational effectiveness.

Fellow speaker Sir Paul Silk said none of the UK Government’s arguments against devolution were robust.

“The Government argues that policing cannot be devolved unless criminal justice is devolved but, actually, it’s easy to imagine devolved policing without devolved criminal justice,” he said, adding, “Devolution should enhance integration between public services and should not damage cross-border communications. It would also increase autonomy.”

South Wales’ Police and Crime Commissioner Alun Michael explained he believes devolved policing in England should be the responsibility of PCCs, not mayors, to ensure it is delivered effectively.

He also said if policing is localised in England, the arguments against Welsh devolution would be weakened.

“It would be quite an irony if devolution in England was the catalyst for devolution in Wales,” he said.

“Devolution has the potential to improve local policing if conducted effectively,” he said.

Another member of the panel, Richard Wyn Jones, professor of Welsh politics at Cardiff University, issued a warning: “So far England hasn’t learned from Wales’ mistakes.

“In fact, England is about to repeat some mistakes but won’t enjoy being able to recover quite as we have in Wales. So this is quite a serious warning. Comparing England to Wales makes me worry that the UK Government is about to get this wrong.”
**Focus on women in policing**

In an entertaining and informative conference speech DS Nita Jhanji-Garrod gave an insight into her 29-year career with Greater Manchester Police during Wednesday’s conference.

Nita, the Force’s first female Asian officer, showed how much the police service has changed in that time but nevertheless revealed the prejudice she had faced along the way in ‘The future of women in policing’ session.

The service was becoming more reflective of the communities it serves without thinking and that should continue as everyone embraced difference.

“I challenge you to be the change you want to see in the police service,” she told delegates.

Earlier in the session, officers heard from an officer young in service, PC Sally Mulvaney of North Wales Police, who said that as a 5ft 2in, petite blonde woman she had experienced unconscious bias from others - suggesting others saw her as not very intelligent and fragile - but she had actually been more adversely affected by her own pre-conceptions.

“Unconscious bias affects how we see ourselves and that can be far more limiting and far more damaging. Glass ceilings do not exist. Unconscious bias is holding women back in the police,” said Sally.

She found other people’s bias easier to confront than her own – you just had to prove them wrong!

She said: “Don’t pre-judge yourself, push yourself because no-one is going to do it for you.”

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**Considering the older workforce**

By Vickie Day, secretary of Gwent Police Federation.

Older women officers often feel discriminated against, isolated and vulnerable at work, delegates heard at our annual conference during a session called ‘The Older Workforce’.

Dee Collins, West Yorkshire Temporary Chief Constable, said the problem was particularly prevalent among those going through the menopause, which she stated ‘is an occupational issue of growing importance’.

She continued: “It is one of the last unmanaged health taboos. Many colleagues feel isolated and vulnerable and it can affect women of all ages... it needs to be taken seriously now.”

Ms Collins said that 13 million women in the UK are currently going through the menopause – 72 per cent felt unsupported at work, seven out of 10 experienced debilitating symptoms and 50 per cent hadn’t confided in their line manager.

Sufferers face increased risks of disciplinary and absence procedures, and are often distressed because their coping mechanisms can be affected so they can be susceptible to issues like depression.

While there is legislation to cover discrimination issues, it is vital that forces gripped the problem and moved it further up their agenda.

Ms Collins went onto say: "An ageing workforce brings significant benefits, including significant knowledge, experience and commitment, and that should be recognised."

Jayne Willetts, PFEW equality lead, highlighted the 106 employment tribunal claims for disability discrimination the Federation had received over the past 12 months – which does not include the ‘hundreds and hundreds more contacts and requests for advice’ which are resolved before reaching a claims stage.

With some recent changes to pensions legislation officers will need to work longer before they are able to retire.

Therefore we are far more likely to see this issue become more prevalent in the future. Presently there is little understanding and knowledge around how this affects the individual and the wider implications for the Force itself. I think it’s vitally important we work together in understanding this issue with additional training where needed and welfare support to those affected now and in years to come.
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Joined up approach needed to help vulnerable people

All too often information was only passed between agencies via a serious case review and rarely at the right time, in the right place and between the right professionals in a way that could prevent a vulnerable victim dying.

“I think policing has done a good job in getting its house in order,” he said, adding it must improve further and that protecting children and the vulnerable was the most important job in policing.

He predicted an increase in domestic abuse cases and accepted there were major challenges through child sexual exploitation, elderly abuse and honour based crime to name just a few.

A recent survey revealed 82 per cent of superintendents working in public protection had received no training in the role, 52 per cent had no previous experience of it, 65 per cent felt this made them vulnerable, 81 per cent felt multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) sharing could be better and 70 per cent felt there were no arrangements in place for their own wellbeing.

Superintendents felt the investigations often came at an emotional price and if anything went wrong they were left with the finger of blame pointed at them.

A number of recommendations have been put forward to improve this.

Photographs showing Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, Victoria Climbie, Baby P and Daniel Pelka brought home the key message of a conference session looking at how the police service can tackle the new volume crime involving vulnerable people.

Chief Superintendent Gavin Thomas, the first speaker in the debate, stressed that all agencies working with vulnerable people had to improve information sharing and partnership working.

Developing digital capability

Making police officers’ jobs easier was at the heart of the Vision 2020 digital programme, Giles York, Chief Constable of Sussex Police, told conference.

But, during The Vision 2020 – Developing Specialist and Digital Capabilities session, he said the long-term aim to move evidence to a digital process is a highly complex national issue.

“We currently try to second guess what’s going to be needed when we’re building case files for the CPS but that has to change as we move into the digital process. That move isn’t simple. We are working across great complexities and digital case file transfer for some forces means brown envelopes being passed around,” he said.

“The police and the public can catch digital evidence in the first instance so we need to be able to investigate it and pass it on. Following the Shoreham air crash we received around 700 pieces of digital media.

“We had no control over their formats so we know we can’t always control how we receive digital evidence. But we can control our own processes.”

Giles also told officers the criminal justice system was investing very heavily in the development of digital case files in order to develop a common platform across the CPS.

Force for Good

Thank you for your support in-Force in raising awareness of the second phase of our Force for Good community sponsorship initiative earlier this year.

We were overwhelmed by the level of response we received nationally, with almost 1,400 officers, staff and their families taking the time to tell us about initiatives in their local area.

Our judges were impressed by the huge variety of initiatives nominated, and their clear focus on improving the lives of members of the community.

So how did Gwent do?

We received 20 applications from Gwent and were able to support six of these with £1,750 funding in total:

- Ashley Caff, Torfaen - £500
- Cwmynyscoy Community Youth Club - £200
- Intergeneration Club, Gwent - £300
- Paws on Patrol, Torfaen - £100
- Supporting Badgers of St Johns, Gwent - £400
- Morgan Jones Community Allotments - £250.

We’ll be opening up the application window for the next phase of Force for Good in September so we’ll share more information with you nearer the time.

There’s more information about Force for Good on our dedicated website pages, but if you have any further questions, please contact your relationship manager or email us at champions@pmas.co.uk.

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Police Mutual Team

FORUM Summer 2016 13
In the first of a series of articles in which Gwent Police Federation chairman Tim Wilcox asks key Force decision-makers the questions officers themselves would like answered, we put Deputy Chief Constable Craig Guildford under the spotlight.

**TW**: Our officers in many departments and sections and telling us that they are extremely fearful of their numbers dropping any further, are we going lower?

**CG**: I can answer that in one word, no! As a Force we’ve reached where we need to be through to 2020/21 and the rank mix is pretty much there too as per the model. All that we are doing now is topping up on numbers. By July we will have taken on 60 of the planned 100 new constables during this financial year.

That is a position that takes into account those that are projected to leave by retirement, normal, ill-health, VES and a handful of officers who resign for other work each year.

**TW**: We received feedback around VES that the officers who did take up the scheme felt unwanted from the moment of their initial enquiry. Are you disappointed to see that some officers want to leave?

**CG**: Very much so as policing is in my blood and my family but I understand and respect in a non-judgemental way that not everyone views the job as I do. I am disappointed to hear some of what you have been told about the VES experience of officers. I view VES as an opportunity for those who wish to make a fresh start or to pursue something they’ve always wanted to do outside the service, not only as a means for the disenchanted to leave.

The truth is that policing nationally is undergoing a huge change, demand continues to change, public expectations change and the financial reality in which the country finds itself has changed over time. If some officers feel that they cannot continue in the service then I genuinely wish them the very best for their futures. I hope that they will look back on their time in the service of their communities with fondness. Their efforts have been appreciated, however, the public need officers who have a strong desire to serve and to make a difference regardless of the challenges of tomorrow.

**TW**: With the numbers of officers that we now operate with, how do you intend to ensure that the best use is made of their time?

**CG**: We are constantly looking at how we can make officers’ work easier to manage. We do appreciate that some demands are likely to increase even as we continue to remove demand from the system today. The introduction of the Samsung device has made a positive difference and our collaborative Fusion work with South Wales Police continues to deliver new applications in addition to our unstinting attack upon unnecessary checking and bureaucracy.

We have also made substantial investments in other areas which are of benefit to our officers such as the Body Worn Video, Gridcop, STORM and the FCR to name but a few. We are committed to investing further in technology and I am optimistic that we will realise further efficiencies by automating more processes to save staff time and effort.

**TW**: Since the current austere times have begun, it has seemed to our officers that their training has been of less importance to the Force, the increased use of NCALT being one example. How is the training of officers going to be progressed?

**CG**: I certainly do not think that is the case and I have deliberately increased investment in training quite markedly though I have stopped conference attending in sixes! I would point to the introduction of properly structured training days as being a clear demonstration of our commitment to the training of officers and staff. The commitment to training also extends to that which was given for the introduction of the STORM command and control system. I also want every front-line officer to receive cyber training and have one more class for all front line officers.

We’ve also secured some further CID, SIO and joint interviewing courses externally this year. NCALT is only ever part of a range of training tools at our disposal.

**TW**: There is a perception among officers that investigations by PSD have increased in both their number and scope. Officers are telling us they feel their actions are being reviewed more harshly than ever before and the fear of a complaint is often uppermost in their minds when attending calls.

**CG**: I am aware of this perception and I think that I can assist by putting this myth into context. My drive has been to shift the proportion of work firmly towards performance and away from misconduct. At the same time, I have ensured that a local resolution/investigation approach has been implemented East and West with dedicated resources.

The proportions are illuminating; almost 70 per cent of the workload is now related to performance and dealt with locally, leaving the remaining 30 per cent with PSD at the centre. Also over 80 per cent of our gross misconduct hearings begin with members of staff doing the right thing and raising the issue in line with the Code of Ethics. There will always be a balance to be struck and by necessity notices are raised to protect individuals. I have just taken on the national PSD lead and the draft Policing and Crime Bill should actually assist us in increasing the number of expeditious informal local resolutions.

**TW**: The introduction of a PDR again, and its link to future pay, is of concern to our officers who feel they may not have the time to properly construct their evidence, how do you see it working for them?

**CG**: The new PDR is linked to pay but it has a clear assumption of competence built into its framework. It is designed to highlight talents that officers have and we have insisted that the bureaucracy will be kept to an absolute minimum. I see it as a good means to assist in the development of officers and staff which will ensure that supervisors sit down with them and have meaningful conversations. It will also help to ensure that our force priorities will be clear to everyone on a personal level and that they are tailored appropriately by role.

**TW**: The number of and scope of changes to custody provision have put the officers who work in custody and those who use it under quite some pressure in recent times and we have had many concerns raised about it. Do you think the latest model will address these concerns?
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CG: I do think that, yes. Part of my reasoning is that we have clearly listened to the concerns that officers have raised through various means and we have acted upon them. As an example, the feedback was that some one to ones were a wasteful use of their time; so we have made changes to the process and justification required. I also think it is working much better by having the DOs booking in detainees and a firm emphasis upon queue busting. I also want to improve the working environment and CCTV/life signs in the main suite too.

TW: Is one custody unit in Gwent enough?

CG: One full-time custody unit does fit the demand profile and I believe that we have now got the staffing level right to ensure that the custody procedure is much swifter. I do appreciate some of the distances involved in transporting detainees but an agreement will be reached to use Merthyr Tydfil shortly. With the new model and this facility being open to us, I think we will have custody operating really well in Gwent.

TW: What stations will be able to use the Merthyr custody facility?

CG: The final operational decision lies with the ACC but I would envisage those stations along the Heads of the Valleys road and the stations North of Blackwood would be the obvious candidates.

TW: How is the financial picture looking for Gwent?

CG: Despite the challenges, we are in a really strong position and if we continue as we have done to date, we will remain very much ahead of the game because we have delivered some considerable transformational changes already. The challenge continues but rest assured that we are well on track with our plans and we continue to find additional savings through efficiencies, technologies, collaborations, your ideas and lots of hard work. In fact, I suspect that other forces who are not perhaps as far down the track will look at us with some degree of envy of where we now are.

TW: We have seen a sharp increase in Force, in line with national trends, for long-term sickness particularly around mental health. Why do you think that is and what is the Force doing to assist?

CG: Investing in the continuance of our OHU department, many forces do not have this facility, a Force welfare officer who provides brilliant in-house counselling services and subscribing to the ‘Care First’ 24/7 counselling service all have their part to play. We have invested in resilience training and have a number of mental health champions in Force. The one important point here is that we are able to talk about it openly which demonstrates how far we have come as a service. The challenge spans prevention, recognition, resilience, care and some of the obvious NHS treatment pathway frustrations which I often see.

TW: How accessible and likely do you feel promotion is for those officers who are qualified?

CG: I have been keen to ensure that opportunities are created as a result of change. Colleagues will have seen that we have undertaken processes for ACC, C/Supt, C/Insp and Insp in the last 12 months. We intend to do superintendents and sergeants too so I only see the future as positive in terms of opportunities. Some of that is also due to the fact that many of the 30-year double intakes are approaching retirement and it’s good to see that some of our staff have been successful in gaining national secondments too. This coupled with the recruitment plans we have will all create opportunities for those who seek promotion in the future.

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