

NATIONAL WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT FORUM
QUARTERLY MEETING
HOSTED AT WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AT TALLY HO! BIRMINGHAM
FRIDAY 2 December 2016

1. Introduction and welcome

Lesley-Anne Knowles (L-AK), NWEF Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting with Steve Mitchel (SM), as Vice Chair.

Today's guest speakers were introduced to members:

Jonathan Houdmont, Assistant Professor of Occupational Health Psychology - critical friend to the group and who has recently worked with the PFEW in relation to stress levels in policing.

Chris Rowson - previous Chair of this group and currently undertaking some work with Police Mutual

Paul Witcomb - Police Mutual.

The Chair advised the group a letter of condolence and support had been sent to Dr Ralph Sampson's family on behalf of his colleagues in this forum. As a mark of respect and recognition of Dr Sampson's contribution and effort to the work of the forum a minute's silence was held.

a) Apologies

Apologies were noted. The Chair acknowledged that another national meeting was taking place today which many of our occupational health colleagues would be attending.

b) Minutes of Meeting 2nd September 2016 and Matters Arising

Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.
Matters arising were dealt with and updated upon as per the attached action list.

2. Revised Terms of Reference (TOR)

The Chair updated that some minor changes had been made to the draft TOR document based on suggestions and comments received, she requested suggestions from members to ensure the future agenda of the forum was captured.

The Chair announced she had chosen the new title for the group from suggestions previously discussed and provided to her. The new name of the group being National Wellbeing and Engagement Forum (NWEF).

A discussion was held around whether using the word engagement in the title of the forum may cause confusion. However it was agreed by the group that without engagement wellbeing may not be achieved, since effective engagement being important to receive and act upon the voice of the workforce.

It was agreed proper and full communication would be required to avoid confusion of the work of the NWEF.

The Chair commented it would be helpful to receive an update on the findings of the national survey commissioned by the Federation due to be presented at a future meeting. Learning points from the research may inform further discussion around the name of the group.

Steven Penfold, Devon & Cornwall, suggested including a reference to ensure efficient and effective financial support linked to injury awards and pensions.

The Vice Chair suggested guest attendees should be extended to Staff Associations and the Police Federation. The Chair advised that an Inspector from the Federation had requested to be invited to future meetings of this group. All agreed, to ensure transparency and a consistent approach. Matt Johnston, College of Policing, suggested the invite should be pitched at a national level, the Chair confirmed the request was from a representative from the national PFEW.

Sheila Donscha, Derbyshire, queried if Unison would be invited also. The Chair confirmed the invitation would be extended nationally to ensure transparency.

The Chair advised a workplan with objectives and timescales would be drafted in line with the Action Plan in the strategy document.

ACTION: Update the TOR and circulate to members, Chair

ACTION: Draft workplan, Chair/ Vice Chair

3. Updates from Wellbeing & Engagement Group

Damian Morley (DM), GMP, provided an update from the last meeting held by the Wellbeing and Engagement Group. He confirmed the group intends for their work to be in line with the national agenda around health and wellbeing and health and safety, and the ideas to come out of the group should be visionary and strategic.

DM referred to a tweet which suggested a Bluelight Charter is hoped to be in place by December 2016, he advised this is an area of work being progressed but may not achieve intended timescales.

DM updated that it was proposed to seek accreditation of the Charter and that ACAS had been approached on this issue. It is recognised the bluelight charter needs to be completed and in place before further work on seeking accreditation can be progressed.

DM updated that the outcome of recent HMIC inspections on wellbeing was generally good, with 1 force being assessed as excellent. However an 'excellent' score meant there were no areas of improvement or progression to be identified.

A website is currently being designed and the timescale for publication is March 2017, first impressions of the draft were well received. The website will contain information and guidance on areas such as trauma support, support for FLO's, much more focussed on mental wellbeing and avoiding the term PTSD.

A concern from the Superintendents Association around sleep deprivation has been raised and so when carrying out engagement surveys these should be extended upwards to management.

Dr Ian Hesketh, is working with the public health charter to ensure a police appropriate charter can be produced for launch next year, therefore more collaboration with public health is likely.

DM advised in his own force they are currently working on a wellbeing app, and the main strands of work being progressed are around leadership and organisational wellbeing. His own opinion being that it is important for people's wellbeing to feel supported by supervision.

The Chair thanked DM for providing the update, she confirmed it was interesting the focus was on mental health and post-traumatic stress and agreed the term PTSD should be avoided with the focus being more about mental wellbeing. She is keen to see the national agenda relating to cultural aspects and see how changes can be implemented to deliver on objectives. She advised she hoped to meet with DC Andy Rhodes to start to discuss the work of the NWEF and how she hoped this could support the national agenda.

ACTION: Chair

The Chair advised that Northumbria Police have undertaken the Durham University survey and highlighted if more forces get involved it will provide a benchmark to provide comparison but also to support opportunity to share best practice.

4. Police Mutual Employee Benefits Wellbeing

Chris Rowson, previous Chair of this group, introduced himself advising that since leaving West Mids Police he has been working with Police Mutual to work towards developing services to support wellbeing. He introduced Paul Witcomb from Police Mutual to present the work being developed.

Paul Witcomb (PW), gave an overview of Police Mutual explaining they are a service created by Police Officers for Police Officers and the objective of their work is to improve lives.

He listed some of the campaigns already available which forces may be interested in:

'Be Fit For Campaign' – a campaign to boost moral which could be providing a food van to stations to provide hot breakfasts.

Health Vans - visiting stations to carry out well man and well woman health screening.

Wellbeing zone – web based service available on the Police Mutual website, some forces have this embedded in their own intranet websites already.

The service that is being presented today is a pilot scheme to offer a platform of flexible benefits to support employee attraction, employee retention, wellbeing and financial benefits called 'Choices'.

PW gave an overview of the products currently available to be included in the platform and the products which are being developed.

During the FAQ section of the presentation PW advised Police Mutual have asked for clarification from the Home Office on the topic of *"Does Salary Sacrifice reduce the individual's pay for purposes of pension calculation."* Forces are encouraged to speak with the Home Office if clarification is required.

PW advised that Police Mutual are currently working with Lancashire constabulary and British Transport Police to implement the Choices platform and have interest from a further 9 forces.

Employee Benefit Consultants are available to support forces with a communication strategy and support full engagement with employees. A Data Analyst is also available to provide data information so forces can see how the platform is being used by employees within their force.

Police Mutual would like forces to provide ideas and feedback on what their requirements might be from the platform and what products they think will be beneficial to dovetail with the work already being implemented and avoid duplication. Wellbeing is at the heart of the service, mental wellbeing is an aspect Police Mutual is particularly interested in gaining an input from forces.

CR advised the future of the Choices platform was to provide a complimentary suite of products to support wellbeing and therefore they are keen to realise how the work of the NWEF and the research piece carried out by the Federation on stress and wellbeing could be influenced by the product.

CR advised they would like to set up a user group to gather input on how the platform looks, its usability and further develop the product to provide the best support possible to forces and officers. He feels there is an opportunity the platform could benefit the wider organisation in helping to move along cultural change, encouraging recruitment and retention of employees by offering attractive employment benefits.

There were some queries around procurement rules. The Chair, advised clarity can be obtained on this issue from local procurement colleagues. Volunteers to be provided to Dawn Hemsley, Northumbria Police, for collation before Christmas if possible.

ACTION: All Members to consider volunteers for a user group.

ACTION: Presentation slides to be shared with members of NWEF, (DH)

5. Work and Wellbeing in Policing

Jonathan Houdmont (JH), Assistant Professor of Occupational Health Psychology at the University of Nottingham, introduced his presentation. He advised his work is based on a decade of police based research and his paper was published on 16th November in the Oxford Journals of Occupational Medicine. A hard copy publication will be produced in 2017 however JH can provide a pdf copy on request.

ACTION: Obtain copy of JH's paper for circulation, (DH)

JH updated that work he was commissioned to carry out for the Federation was a survey based piece of work during February 2016, 17,000 officers have provided responses and the findings are hoped to be communicated during 2017.

The presentation being given today is based upon research JH carried out on behalf of West Mids Police and Devon & Cornwall in relation to, Working hours and Common Mental Disorders. There being a perception that the number of hours worked equals performance, hence a culture in the police force of working long hours.

JH reported that various studies have found officers working long hours (more than 49 hours per week) are twice more likely to report psychological distress, anxiety and depression of clinical severity. They are also almost twice as likely to report high

emotional exhaustion, being emotionally over extended and depleted of emotional resource. Those working long hours and experiencing burnout are 1.3 times more likely to report high feelings of depersonalisation leading to negative cynical attitudes towards their employer and decreased engagement.

JH referred to a study from Germany which reflected that officers who are emotionally exhausted are more likely to be assaulted as their reaction times are slower and they are less perceptive to reading and handling a situation.

The Chair referred to the wellbeing model being implemented within Northumbria Police. She shared with the group the development work being carried out around recruitment to test the emotional resilience and psychological wellbeing of applicants at entry level, this being done through online testing and screenings using a program called SIFT.

She also summarised various initiatives supporting wellbeing, highlighting the 'Change in a Day' events which are regularly being held to give employees the chance to raise ideas to be worked through to implementation, she advised a wellbeing themed event will be held in December.

ACTION: Share presentation slides, (DH)

6. Legal Updates

G4S Cash Solutions (UK) –v- Powell

Nicholas Wirz (NW), Principal Solicitor, Northumbria Police provided an update on the case of *G4S Cash Solutions (UK) –v- Powell*. This was an EAT case relating to reasonable adjustment and whether to pay someone the salary of their substantive rank/grade to do a lesser job.

The key issue of this case is to consider what is reasonable.

NW referred to the case of James –v- Norfolk, where Norfolk Police were unwilling to deploy an Officer in the rank of Inspector into a police staff role. Meaning the only other alternative available was ill-health retirement. The court found that to deploy the Officer into a police staff role would be reasonable as the alternative option of ill-health retirement would be very expensive.

NW advised the lesson from the G4S –v- Powell case is very similar to James –v- Norfolk in that costs of the options available should be considered.

Pensions Law

NW provided a further explanation to his update at the last meeting where Home Office Guidance is at variance to case law, specifically highlighting when it is and when it is not appropriate to consider a reconsideration.

7. Updates from Home Office

Harriet Mackinlay (HM), provided the following updates

a) IOD Regulations

HM advised that owing to workload the review of the Injury Benefit Regulations is delayed. She advised force representations need to be made via the Home Office to the Police Advisory Board (PAB) to enable a reprioritisation of the review. HM

requested all members to put in writing what impact not having the revised regulations is having.

It was requested the draft regulations which were produced for consultation in 2013 should be circulated and used as a starting point for providing feedback to the Home Office.

ACTION: Draft regulations from 2013 to be circulated. Feedback from all members to be sent to the Chair for collation and forwarding to the Home Office.

b) PMAB Contract

HM advised there was no update regarding the conduct of representatives at PMAB hearings. She reminded members that concerns should be put in writing to the Home Office for consideration.

ACTION: All members to share concerns/ experiences in writing to the Chair for collation and forwarding to the Home Office.

c) General Policy Updates

HM advised that the work of DCC Rhodes is proving of interest to ministers, the focus being on workforce transformation. Wellbeing is a topic which is rising on the national agenda and has resulted in additional funding being provided to the work undertaken by Mind.

A concern was raised that the Mind programme engages directly with officers but not strategically with forces. It was felt engagement was lacking and therefore the empowerment of Chief Constables was not being supported.

Members raised concern that initiatives are not given opportunity to embed properly, a query was raised around how decisions are made by the ministers for allocating funding when it is felt Mind are not engaging strategically to incorporate services within occupational health.

Sue Hadden (SH), Northumbria Police, advised a Blue Light regional group had been set up in the North East which has helped establish a valuable working relationship with Mind.

HM advised she would feedback the concerns raised to the Home Office wellbeing lead.

ACTION: HM

8. Any Other Business

a) JRFT – Alternative Test

MJ, updated that the alternative test has been approved by the Professional Committee. Implementation guidance has been drafted and is pending publication on the College of Policing website.

A letter has been issued to Chief Officers to help forces prepare for implementation.

ACTION: Circulate letter (DH)

Guidance for specialist roles has also been drafted but is awaiting consideration by the Fitness Testing Working Group (FTWG) and the Federation.

A full research paper is to be published in 2017 which underpins the validation of this work.

b) CIPD Scotland Annual Conference

The Chair informed the group that CIPD Scotland's annual conference will take place on 2nd March 2017 in Edinburgh, the theme being Wellbeing and Engagement. An earlybird discounted rate is available for those booking before the end of 2016.

c) SMP Services

The Chair highlighted that there is a reducing number of SMP's able and willing to undertake SMP duties. She suggested this be an agenda item at the March meeting, to consider what support can be provided to SMP's to assist with this role.

MJ advised if SMP training was required then a request through the College of Policing would need to be progressed as it was an area that is no longer in his remit of work.

d) Pension Ombudsman Relationship Meeting

Sarah Mekins (SM), North Yorkshire, advised she had attended the PO Relationship meeting where it was reported a determination of the Huddle case is expected early 2017.

This case is related to tax payable on pension payments in circumstances where the force has failed to advise the former Officer they are unable to return in a Police Staff role within a month of retiring.

The Chair closed the meeting by wishing all members a Merry Christmas and looked forward to seeing everyone in the New Year.

Date of the next meeting, Tally Ho!, West Midlands Police.

10am – 10th March 2017