

NATIONAL WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT FORUM
QUARTERLY MEETING
HOSTED AT WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AT TALLY HO! BIRMINGHAM
FRIDAY 10 March 2017

1. Introduction and welcome

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

a) Apologies

Apologies were noted.

b) Minutes of Meeting 2nd December 2016

Minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

A query was raised by a member of the forum relating to the minutes being available in the public domain. L-AK clarified the minutes are published for FOI purposes and to ensure transparency of the work of the group and raise awareness of the wider national agenda topics discussed.

b) Matters Arising

Matters arising were dealt with and updated upon as per the attached action list, see appendix 1.

2. Work Streams

An interactive session took place facilitated by SM.

Members of the forum were asked to consider the key issues being faced by Forces currently and consider the links to the national agenda.

Once work streams had been agreed volunteers were requested for leading on the priority areas to take on a co-ordinating role and take the work forward.

Three overarching work streams were identified, see appendix 2.

- Health & Wellbeing: Lead - to be confirmed
- Limited Duties: Lead - Jaua Harris, Metropolitan Police
- Injury on Duty and Ill Health Retirement: Lead - Sarah Mekins, North Yorkshire Police

Action: Volunteer to lead Health & Wellbeing work stream

3. Updates from Wellbeing & Engagement Group

Damian Morley (DM), GMP, advised the Wellbeing and Engagement Group (chaired by DCC Rhodes) had not met recently however he provided an update on the work being progressed.

He outlined a peer learning event he attended which was facilitated by the Open University Police Research Consortium where attendees were provided with more information around the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework and the “Oscar Kilo” website.

DM advised a conference was to be held on March 22nd where the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework and the “Oscar Kilo” website will be launched.

4. Updates from the ‘Choices’ Stakeholder Group

Liz Eades, Sussex & Surrey, gave a brief overview of the discussions held at the first meeting held on 1st March 2017 of the stakeholder group with Police Mutual looking at the development of the ‘Choices’ employee benefits platform.

Paul Witcomb, Police Mutual, provided a recap from the last NWEF meeting reminding members of what the ‘Choices’ platform can offer employees and the potential organisational benefits.

It was explained that the focus of the stakeholder group was to obtain an input from organisations to ensure the system dovetailed and complimented wellbeing strategies rather than creating duplication.

All members were requested to feed ideas to Liz Eades or Chris Rowson.

ACTION: All members

5. Legal Updates

Employment Law

Nicholas Wirz, Northumbria, provided a verbal update on a recent employment law case heard by the European Court of Justice which related to the maximum age limit for police recruits, *Gorka Salaberria Sorondo –v- Academia*. NW referred members to a UK case which related to similar circumstances *Hart v Derbyshire*.

Pensions Law

NW provided a further explanation to his update at the last meeting where Home Office Guidance is at variance to case law. Focussing this time on how to measure degree of disablement.

NW provided an update on the recent high court judgement *Fisher v Northumbria and PMAB*. He highlighted the outcome of the judgement confirmed the case law brought about in the cases of *Anton*, *Ayre* and *Walther (1)*.

Ground 1 of the Fisher judgement related to comparator and the use of Police Salary, the high court judge quashed the PMAB determination for the reasons that the comparison between injured and uninjured earnings was not analysed sufficiently and there was no rationale as to why police officer salary was not used.

Clarification is provided by this judgement that police officer salary would be the correct comparator where the former officer has only one qualifying injury and is otherwise healthy.

Ground 4 of the Fisher judgement related to the backdating of decisions at PMAB and reconsidered injury pensions. The high court judge confirmed the effective date would be

the date of the PMAB decision or the new SMP decision, backdating should not be applied.

A query was raised around the process for Home Office Guidance to be withdrawn and whether a decision had to be made through an official route. Harriet MacKinlay (HM), Home Office, advised the correct route for instigating changes is through the Police Advisory Board (PAB). HM advised she would submit a query to the HO pension's team.

ACTION: HM to raise query with pension's team for HO guidance to be withdrawn

6. Police Treatment Centres

Mark Oxley and Fran Greenwood from the Police Treatment Centres delivered a presentation to inform members of the services available.

Members were advised that membership of the Police Treatment Centre is available to Police Officers, PCSO's, DO's and Special Constables. The main aim is to assist Officers and staff back to work by providing a relaxing environment where patients can focus on their recovery.

The Police Treatment Centre is a registered charity and is reliant upon fundraising, donations and grants.

Treatment services follow three strands:

- Physiotherapy;
- Psychological Wellbeing; and
- Prevention

A new Psychological Wellbeing Programme has recently been introduced which offers a structured two week treatment package for serving officers, treatment needs are assessed via psychometric testing and application form.

A research study carried out in 2016 over a six month period by Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, to assess the effectiveness and value of treatment services, found that patients improved sufficiently to be able to make a return to work within six weeks.

The PTC representatives advised they are able to come and attend any wellbeing events being planned by Forces. They are also able to come and speak with new recruits, supervisors and senior leaders to continue to raise awareness and add to the efforts to evidence the benefits of treatment to workforce wellbeing.

Find out more:

<http://www.thepolicetreatmentcentres.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ThePoliceTreatmentCentres>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzjvMC9j7CShXuSHMh0BIsQ?feature=watch>

<https://twitter.com/PTCentres>

The PTC outlined the St George's Police Children Trust which is a further registered charity providing financial support to children and young people throughout school years and further education.

Find out more:

<http://www.stgeorgespolicechildrentrust.org/>

<https://twitter.com/SGPCT1>

7. PFEW Welfare Survey

Mary Elliott-Davies, a research practitioner from the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) delivered a presentation to provide members with an overview of the findings of the research project carried out focussing on the relationship between demand, capacity and officer welfare.

Dr Jonathan Houdmont, Assistant Professor of Occupational Health Psychology at the University of Nottingham was commissioned to run the national welfare survey in partnership with the PFEW.

The survey was run during February 2016 with an overall response rate of 14%. The questions were designed to explore whether the four areas of concern which were identified through focus groups have a relationship with demand and capacity. Data sets representing all 43 forces across England and Wales are available on line, and have been shared with individual forces.

It is hoped the results of this area of research will provide a benchmark and future research will be carried out to compare improvements or changes in officer wellbeing.

LAK encouraged all forces to analyse their own survey results to identify areas of improvement and start building appropriate plans.

The PFEW can assist forces with accessing their survey results and answering any further queries. Presentation slides will also be circulated following the meeting.

8. Updates from Home Office

Harriet Mackinlay (HM), provided the following updates:

a) IOD Regulations

LAK updated that some responses had been received from forces providing feedback on the draft Police (Injury Benefit) Regulations 2013, however she requested for responses to continue to be sent to her.

She advised Northumbria Police will collate all responses together with a covering correspondence on behalf of all forces to the Home Office.

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

b) PMAB Contract

No update

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

c) General Policy Updates

It had been noted by the Home Office Pensions team that there had been a recent decrease in reported medical appeals.

Following the meeting held in December where feedback was provided by members on MIND, indications were being received by the Home Office that engagement at a

strategic level was improving. HM reported that she had been advised further funding has been allocated to MIND for phase 2.

DM highlighted that GMP had been offered places for volunteers to attend resilience training, however as it was near the Christmas period the timing proved difficult.

Comments were raised of the inconsistency of experiences across the country, some networking groups and support from MIND were very active and others were not.

A comment was raised that forces had received notification local funding was being withdrawn which has led to the established networking groups being disbanded. There was general discussion relating to the understanding that funding was provided centrally to assist with the initial work relating to mental health following which it was expected that forces would contribute financially and progress the work themselves.

LAK requested an update to clarify what the national direction was centrally on the continuation of work in this area.

ACTION: HM to gain clarity on the expectation of forces to continue with work around mental wellbeing (work linked to MIND)

d) New PMAB Contract – SMP Training

LAK updated members that a discussion was being progressed between College of Policing (CoP), Health Management Ltd (HML) and a colleague at the Home Office (HO) relating to the clause in the PMAB contract around delivery of training to SMPs and PPAs.

MJ advised discussions were currently exploring clarity on the scope of the contractual provision. Training venues have been offered by the CoP and Northumbria Police once content has been developed. Further updates will be provided at future meetings.

LAK reminded members that forces had a responsibility to ensure SMPs training and knowledge to enable them to discharge their statutory responsibility when instructed.

ACTION: All Members to provide suggestions to the Chair on training delivery content.

8. Any Other Business

a) Medical Standards for New Recruits

A query was raised on whether the medical standards guidelines for new recruits could be updated. MJ confirmed work is currently being progressed by the CoP to revise these standards however the expertise of the FMA will still be relied upon.

The Chair closed the meeting advising the next meeting is likely to be held in a different location owing to a number of practicalities, however this will be confirmed as soon as possible.

Date and location of next meeting:

Friday 9th June 2017 at 10am, Newcastle City Centre Police Station, Newcastle Upon Tyne.