

Scottish Police UNISON: our members' stories



Plus

- ***Challenging domestic violence***
- ***West Midlands victory***
- ***No 'back office'***

No back offices

The United Kingdom is, in some ways, highly decentralised. Even in the days before devolution there were big variations in culture and practice. Scotland in particular was a contrast, despite being ruled from Westminster between 1707 and 1999. Law, education, religion and sporting structures were all distinctive.

That process has accelerated since devolution and it challenges all UK-wide organisations, such as UNISON. This issue of *Police Profile*, therefore, features stories from north of the border to reflect alternative experiences. The Westminster/Home Office approach is not set in stone and there are other contrasting ways of running public services.

Nevertheless, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are all affected by the pressures of budget deficit, failed banks and struggling economies. The recent United Kingdom general election brought a new coalition government to power pledged to cut public services dramatically.

There is a nod in the direction of

protecting 'the frontline'. But UNISON police staff members know that most on-the-streets policing is ineffective without for instance, scientific, communications, transport, IT and technical expertise. There are no 'back-offices'. You might want to leave *Police Profile* open at page 11 (*police staff stars*) where any passing police authority members or ACCs might casually encounter it.

Even where services are privatised and employees are taken off the constabulary's books the private contractor still expects its fee.

Spending cuts, as a result, will find their way into devolved budgets and vital police work will be damaged. Despite devolution, police staff members will be well served by UNISON's strength in numbers and its presence throughout all the constituent parts of the UK.

The union has worked hard both to protect members' pay, conditions and professional status and to remind the public of the valuable work police staff do. For the foreseeable future there will be plenty to do on both those fronts.

Got a story?

In the next issue we plan to report on joint venture proposals and on job evaluation developments.

Send ideas, information, opinion pieces (concise) and letters to me Laurence Pollock, editor, *Police Profile*, email broadgreen68@btinternet.com or tel 07801 665961.

Please copy in national officer Ben Priestley email b.priestley@unison.co.uk

Got an opinion?

Yes we want to hear about those too. A letter – 150 – 200 words long or a 'debate' article which should be 600 words long. The service group executive has final say on what is published.

UNISON POLICE STAFF

profile

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CHANGE OF PERSONAL DETAILS

Have you recently changed your name, address or your workplace? Head office cannot effect these changes on the membership records system. Please inform your branch of any changes as soon as possible, so that branch communications are not sent to the wrong address.

Members can also inform the union of changes in their details through UNISON direct. The new number is 0845 355 0845 and lines are open Monday to Friday 6am to midnight and from 9am-4pm on Saturday.

Hearing difficulties?
Please use textphone
0800 0 697 968

Please note: Calls to UNISONdirect are confidential but may be recorded for training purposes.

Policy? What policy?

You spend 18 months negotiating a policy and within weeks the new HR director says it is 'not fit for purpose'.

As a result the force then rules that police staff offered redeployment instead of redundancy do not qualify for relocation payments. Yet the policy has just been signed off stating clearly that they did qualify.

This is the experience of staff in Cheshire Police where there are plans to cut 500 posts. It is also a colossal waste of time for branch officials who have painstakingly agreed the new policy in endless meetings.

Branch secretary Liz Morris says the new ruling is simply based on

the 'interpretation' of HR. Five staff faced with moving job were then told they would not be given any help with increased transport costs.

Cheshire backed down on the five, agreeing their relocation costs but have started consultation on a new policy that entirely separates relocation and redeployment from redundancy. UNISON went into dispute but management claim there is 'no dispute' because the five's claims were met.

ACAS and UNISON regional organiser Bob Blundell have been involved and the branch is pledged to go to conciliation and arbitration if necessary. But Liz is angry that HR can simply tear up a policy the moment it does not suit.

'HR claimed that one redeployment would have cost £10,000. Our argument is that, if it costs that much then it is not suitable alternative employment. Someone should have managed it better.

'Some members may have to buy cars which they did not previously need to get to their place of work. This has badly affected morale which is already low.'

UNISON is worried that when the force finds that its staff reduction programme has left massive gaps in the organisation the holes will be backfilled by police officers. Thirty-one police officer posts are earmarked to go but no one will actually be made redundant.

And finally...in the West Midlands

Stab-proof vests are finally being issued to police community support officers in the West Midlands after a sustained campaign by UNISON.

West Midlands Police was the last force in the country to provide this protection.

UNISON Police branch secretary Annette Mansell Green said: 'We had a new risk assessment done and presented the findings to the force. We are very pleased with the outcome.

'Previously the force claimed PCSOs did not need the vests as their role was "non-confrontational". But some members of the public did not understand that.'

UNISON national officer for police staff Ben Priestley welcomed the move: 'UNISON raised the problem of West Midlands Police refusing to issue stab-proof vests to our PCSO members with former Police Minister Vernon Coaker and we pressed for action on many other occasions.

'The new chief constable of the West Midlands has clearly listened to these arguments and made the right decision.'

There was also support from West Bromwich Labour MP Tom Watson.

In 2007 he surveyed every force in England and Wales and found just four who did not issue the vests. One of these even issued protective vests for its dogs. Last year he collected figures showing that PCSOs in the West Midlands were assaulted 180 times over a three-year period and warned there was a 'postcode lottery in safety'.

He commented: 'This is great news for front-line PCSOs in the West Midlands and I would like to thank the many hundreds of people who joined the campaign to get them anti-stab vests.'

A review of PCSOs concluded that issuing stab-proof vests would allow them to patrol alone, and so increase visibility and productivity.

The West Midlands Police Authority chairman, Derek Webley, said: 'The authority recognises the key role PCSOs play in the public's confidence in policing, and wants to see them deployed as effectively as possible. We believe that PCSOs are an indispensable part of local policing.'

Scottish members



Photos: Laurence Pollock

Over the water:
Marion McGregor has never fallen out of love with Islay

Straight talking in Islay

Marion McGregor is everyone's auntie on Islay.

Laurence Pollock discovered how much the police service has gained from her common sense and flexibility

When UNISON member Marion McGregor attended a royal reception at the Islay distillery where her husband works, the Duchess of Cornwall asked for a glass of water.

Marion was happy to help out but unimpressed when management later pointed out that the Duchess didn't drink tap water. 'Well she does now', was her reaction. The attitude goes with her unflappability and practical common sense and it will not surprise anyone who knows her.

And her strength of character is not reserved for the Cornwalls.

'There was a new sergeant sitting at the desk opposite me who communicated by sending an email. When he eventually asked me what I was going to do with it, I told him I

had deleted it. If he had something to say he could talk to me.'

As a police staff employee in Bowmore for the last 32 years, there are few on the island she doesn't know or hasn't heard of. And with the local population knowing where she lives and where she works, she is hardly ever off duty.

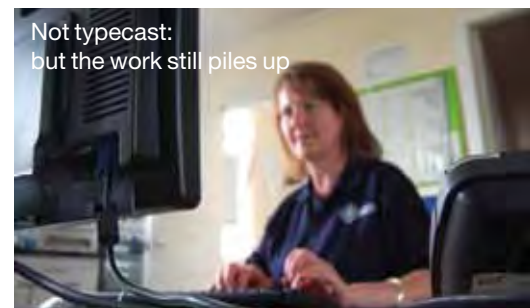
She has watched the station constables and the force chief constables come and go for four decades but she has remained a familiar presence. With luck they will also have listened to her advice and learned:

'You have to police with consent, you can't come here and do your big thing.'

Islay is at the southern end of the Inner Hebrides, west of Jura

and 25 miles from Ireland. It has 3,000 inhabitants and an economy based around whisky distilling and tourism.

Marion moved there as a 19-year-old with glowing memories of childhood holidays. But the romance never faded and she was hired by Strathclyde Police to type, got married and had five daughters – while working fulltime. She now does school talks and works as station assistant, driver and female custody assistant – and still types. With officers changing regularly Marion is a reassuring, familiar face during a police visit to the primary school.



Other duties include paid cleaner, relieving busy officers of the need to tidy confidential papers away when the duster comes out.

A recent job evaluation correctly reassigned her to a higher band but may not have fully recognised the pivotal role she plays as the sole police staff member. Her enthusiasm shines through: 'I still enjoy working for Strathclyde Police. Anything is possible from day to day.'

Islay may seem quiet with just 34 miles of road, no traffic lights and no roundabouts and much of the policing deals with issues focusing on teenage pregnancy, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and youthful speeding.

Traumatic

But from time to time there are big traumatic events and Marion can feel the local pulse. In the past, an unsolved murder case followed by a vigilante beating of the perceived perpetrator offered challenges to all who worked in policing.

And Christmas barely registered in the island one year when a road traffic accident left three islanders, including a father and his 10-year-old son, dead on a dark November night.

'The police officers here had just started but I knew every single one of the fatalities and it was hard to work through.'

Marion's bread and butter, however, is being there, knowing people and knowing the ropes. That includes the schools and social services who also handle the fall out of alcoholism, mental health problems and family troubles: 'Almost everything we do is alcohol related and that includes young people. There is also a lot of under age sex.'

'Auntie M' (as she is known) took multi-tasking to heart on one occasion and became a temporary foster carer.

A child of parents affected by mental health breakdown and

'Her freshly made scones are legendary and possibly of concern to healthy-living professionals'



In the driving seat: multi-tasking comes naturally

alcohol was due to be placed in residential care on the mainland. Police were involved in helping to deal with the situation and Marion became aware.

'I thought there was no way this nine-year-old girl should be leaving Islay for a children's home. There were no foster carers on the island so I asked if she could stay with me – after all I had five daughters.'

It was supposed to be a week but Katie (not her real name) stayed two months, was reunited with her mother and still keeps in touch in adult life.

'By staying with me she could keep up her local schooling. She had lived on junk food and never had anything homemade. So for her birthday I baked a cake in the shape of a chickenburger and chips.'

An avid baker, the station assistant's freshly made scones are

legendary and possibly a concern to healthy-living professionals at force HQ. But Marion herself, whippet-slim thanks to walking, cycling and swimming shows no ill-effects. The cake business and teaching Sunday school give her plenty to do outside the station at Bowmore.

Despite perceptions from the mainland it can be a busy life. Marion has two line managers – the sergeant in Isla and a typing manager in Dumbarton. Typing officers' reports from dictaphones does not go away and 'Dumbarton' monitors the amount of typing being done.

'I have to point out all the other things I am also doing', she says with a smile.

Listen

Any sergeant who plans to get to know Islay has to be prepared to listen. Marion has local knowledge and has been able to offer insights into individuals who appear to be behaving in a threatening way. She knows the ones who mean it and the ones who don't.

Other groups, such as women prisoners also get conscientious attention. When her police colleagues arrested a woman one Christmas day there was no ferry to the mainland so she ended up in the Bowmore station cell. There were concerns about her state of mind so Marion skipped Christmas pudding and spent 27 hours supervising her to ensure she got through.

Her action was typical but she provides the kind of public service that doesn't quite show up in key performance indicators today. That commitment is on retreat everywhere but not in Islay. Any bean counters who plan to interfere had better watch out - and go easy on the emails.

Leading the way on custody



John Mullen: a voice for custody staff

UNISON members are playing key roles in developing custody practice in Scotland. They told **Laurence Pollock** how it works

The job title can confuse elsewhere in the UK and north of the border there is irritation when people assume you mean police community support officer.

But PCSOs in Scotland are police custody and security officers. Working in custody suites, they have replaced police officers with the exception of the sergeant. UNISON members such as Raymond Farrell (Central) and John Mullen (Strathclyde) are demonstrating the versatility and effectiveness of the new role.

As union stewards they are also building UNISON's profile as a positive contributor to good practice and progressive change. In the Strathclyde force, for instance, there is now representation on a key prisoner monitoring body – a reflection of the union's vision and input.

Scottish PCSOs have significant powers and means of restraint. If assaulted, the charge has the same gravity as an attack on police officer.

John Mullen, a former prison officer, has worked for Strathclyde for five years at Baird Street police station. Working with three other PCSOs, the culture was strongly police dominated.

'It used to be performed by police officers seeing out their service', says John a former prison officer, 'but there has been a huge change since civilianisation.'

He believes there is now no place for traditional attitudes to health and safety.

'I'm always talking about officer safety – not going into a cell on your own and having someone to corroborate what happens, for instance. Complacency is the great enemy – it can be very unpredictable and you mustn't switch off.

'Every prisoner coming through has their own issues including mental health, drugs and alcohol. If they are acting peculiarly or slumped in their cell you have make a judgement and you would be looking to the ambulance.

'You have a duty of care to the prisoners and experience goes a long way.'

John was moved to become a UNISON steward when proposals were made for a new custody holding facility at Baird Street. He was concerned that with the current rep leaving there would be no voice for custody staff. He has also successfully challenged a pilot shift pattern that was to be implemented without consultation.

Along with fellow steward Jim Curran, John pressed for a UNISON presence on the force's care of prisoners monitoring group headed by an assistant chief constable. He and Jim are the first non-police officers to sit on it, raising several key issues.

'There is now representation on a key prisoner monitoring body – a reflection of the union's vision'

Central Scotland

Raymond Farrell (right) has been with Central Scotland at Stirling for nine years, following service in the army. His job title for four years was 'custody assistant' but with additional powers of restraint came a recognition that the job was more extensive and demanding than first envisaged. The revised title throughout Scotland reflected that.

'There is a whole raft of legislation, including human rights and health and safety governing work of this sort,' he says.

He and his colleagues are trained to the same level as police officers in the use of restraints and CS spray.

'We have to have a wide range of technical knowledge and practical skills. Under Scottish law, once



someone is arrested a police officer has no further involvement. We might be under the command of police officers but one member of staff cannot work without the other.'

But Raymond confesses to a human side: 'You have a drunk man being brought in, fighting and

spitting but when he sobers up he wants to have a conversation. You can't help liking some of these people and I've been locking some of them up since they were juveniles.

Raymond believes the 'civilianisation' has been a great success: 'There is a potential for PCSOs to work in other areas such as in courts and guarding prisoners on hospitals.

'There could be wider mixed economy releasing police officers to work on the streets.'

As a steward, Raymond finds dealing with attendance management takes up a great deal of his time. He believes the drop to half pay, after six months sick leave, might cause police officers financial difficulty but for those on low pay such as cleaners, 'the prospect of abject poverty' looms.

'We have to have a wide range of technical knowledge and practical skills'

Is your warrant necessary?

UNISON is pressing for civilianisation as a priority as Grampian Police set out on a search for efficiency savings.

Branch secretary Chris Morran says the force must see the move as a priority.

'If you do not need a warrant to do your job then it does not need to be done by a police officer.'

Grampian has already had two voluntary redundancy packages, there is an early retirement programme and many vacancies are not being filled.

The chief constable is currently considering a review of local police offices (stations).

Chris says members are very alarmed: 'They do not know what is happening although Grampian has not raised the issue of redundancies. Members fear that might be coming.'

A specially commissioned report by UNISON in 2008 warned of 'cultural, legal and cost barriers' to increased civilianisation of police forces in Scotland. These include cultural and operational resistance of officers; contractual issues affecting staff deployment; restrictive duties for police officers and the set-up costs of initiating changes in staff-officer deployment.

Stalwart



Lily McNaughton is the stalwart's stalwart. Turned eighty last year she still does two days a week volunteering in the Strathclyde Police UNISON branch office. She is branch welfare officer and sits on both the national retired members and the Scottish retired members' committees. She is a veteran of both NALGO and UNISON (mostly NALGO). Branch secretary Raymond Brown (right) says her contribution is fantastic. 'She is an inspiration to us all and is totally committed to the union.'

Heads up for UNISON

Carol Standish-Leigh was part of Antony Gormley's One & Other an astonishing living monument. It was an opportunity for her to make an extraordinary statement about the need to tackle domestic violence and link in with UNISON's president Gerry Gallagher



'I got a letter, which I nearly binned, because it looked like junk mail. I had been selected'

Campaigning: UNISON spreads the message as Carol takes the high ground

'This was way outside my comfort zone – and I don't have a head for heights,' says Carol Standish-Leigh.

The Fourth Plinth, in the north-west of Trafalgar Square, was originally intended for an equestrian statue but was empty for many years. It is now the location for specially commissioned artworks.

Last year Antony Gormley asked the people of the UK to take over the empty plinth, a space normally reserved for statues of kings and generals, in an image of themselves, and a representation of the whole of humanity.

The plinth was occupied by different people, chosen by ballot,

every hour, 24 hours a day, for 100 days.

For Carol, chair of Derbyshire Police UNISON, standing on the plinth for an hour wasn't straightforward: 'My first reaction was "It's so high". I was shaking so badly on the cherry picker that takes you up to it.'

But she kept her nerve and used the platform to highlight the issue of domestic violence and support police staff colleague Gerry Gallagher whose UNISON presidential year has focused on the damage done by domestic abuse.

During her occupation of the plinth, the White Ribbon Campaign gave away hundreds of durable

enamel white ribbons. End Violence Against Women were also present and Northampton Borough Council used the event, in collaboration with Carol to launch their own domestic violence campaign events.

It began with very little planning. Carol says: 'I was sitting at my computer one Saturday, saw the opportunity to occupy the plinth for an hour and thought it sounded like a hoot. I sent off my name and address and assumed that was that.'

'Then I got a letter, which I nearly binned, because it looked like junk mail. I had been selected and realised I was going to have to do something. I knew it was going to be something I cared about. The

presidential campaign was around domestic violence and the theme fits in with work I already do on women's issues.'

Carol who is co-chair of the East Midlands Region women's committee immediately contacted Gerry, the White Ribbon campaign and End Violence against Women, alerting them to the opportunity.

She and her co-organisers calculate that supporters approached 1,000 people during the afternoon, evening and next morning after Carol's appearance.

There was unexpected media coverage with a shot in the Clive Anderson show of another plinther with a UNISON cap prominently caught in the side netting. And Carol's father followed her progress on the internet from South Africa.

Despite the butterflies she is elated that it actually happened: 'It gave me the biggest buzz I have ever had. When I go to London and see the plinth I keep thinking "I have been up there".'

Despite the personal thrill she is highly focused on the purpose of her participation.

'Figures show that a quarter of those waiting for social housing in Northampton have experienced domestic violence. I just wanted to make a difference.'



Head for heights: the ride on the cherry picker was the worst bit

Gerry's presidential plinth

Gerry Gallagher, retiring UNISON president, used his year of office to put the campaign against domestic violence centre stage.

But his inspiration went back to his early days in Durham police working in communications. He heard police officers reacting to calls about abuse as 'just a domestic'. Some of those cases ended badly.

He acknowledges that the police service as whole has come a long way since then in terms of dedicated officers handling cases and special suites where victims can be interviewed and made safe. And UNISON has been at the forefront in raising awareness and proposing remedies.

But for Gerry current work is not enough. He has repeatedly pressed for workplace policies designed to help staff who are affected by abuse at home.

In addition he has worked to develop a safe haven at UNISON's Croyde Bay Holiday Centre for members who are affected. Gerry set a target of £50,000 which he aimed to crack at last month's National Delegate Conference. The money will go towards developing the facilities there, including staff training, to meet this critical need.

Gerry is looking towards continued updating of UNISON's own policies on domestic abuse and he plans to pursue the issue even after leaving office. He also acknowledges the 'tremendous work' done by the Labour Party women's group.

But he recognises the work still to be done: 'It is incredible the tragedies that can still take place. Police no longer need a complaint of assault to charge but in reality it is still difficult to take this through the court process.'

'There are two murders a week directly linked to domestic violence and it affects all social classes and social groups including women on men and same-sex relationships.'

'Schools, local authorities and health trusts are all trying to remove the taboo round this subject but the biggest problem remains – it goes on behind four walls.'

For Gerry, his year as president has been an opportunity to help take down one of those walls. And he is determined that it will not be put up again.

Raise the Roof on Domestic Abuse

UNISON is working with organisations such as Women's Aid www.womensaid.org.uk to raise awareness about this issue, to offer support to those experiencing domestic abuse and to raise the issue with employers. Work has mainly focused on workplace policies to support UNISON members experiencing domestic violence. Visit www.unison.org.uk/healthcare/pages_view.asp?did=490



The biggest con trick?

In May the Government announced that it would be making an initial £6.2 billion worth of public sector pay cuts to tackle the budget deficit. Three days later, the Home Office announced that it would be accepting responsibility for £367 million of this figure, with £125 million to be clawed back from the 2010 police grant settlement for



England and Wales. Your force has been told how much it has to save as a result. Police staff jobs and the vital services they provide are therefore at risk.

In his statement to Parliament, the new Police Minister Nick Herbert stated he was, '...quite clear that this saving can be achieved by driving out wasteful spending on support functions, reducing bureaucracy and increasing efficiency...'

So the axe is starting to fall on the public sector as UNISON warned it would before the election. And isn't it strange that since the election we have heard very little from our new Government about how the City of London and its greedy financiers are going to play their part in helping to clear up the mess that is very largely of their making? It is surely one of the biggest con tricks in history for the banks to rack up unsustainable debts, to come cap in hand to the taxpayer for a bailout and then get the new Government to pass on those debts to public sector workers to pay for in the form of their jobs and livelihoods.

UNISON, along with a coalition of

100 civil society groups, including the TUC, Oxfam and Comic Relief leader Richard Curtis, is supporting the idea of a 'Robin Hood' tax to raise as much as £250 billion, by a taxing City financial transactions, to support good causes – including saving the public sector from unsustainable and dangerous cuts.

There is a long way to go to persuade the new government that a tax on banks should replace the major cuts it is planning to the public sector, but UNISON will continue to make the case. Public sector cuts are not inevitable, unless you are a government ideologically committed to dismantling the public sector so that rich bankers that started the economic crisis can keep their jobs and their bonuses.

Privatising 999

As *Police Profile* has highlighted in recent editions, Cleveland Police Authority have now confirmed its controversial plans to privatise its 999 Service, and other support functions, and transfer over 600 police staff jobs to the private sector. UNISON has fought the plans all the way and UNISON's national office has been working closely with the Cleveland Police Branch and UNISON's Northern Region on the campaign. We helped to fund a campaign, which has delivered 150,000 postcards to residents in Cleveland warning of the dangers of the 999 Service sell-off. We lobbied key politicians and police stakeholders and recently wrote to the new Home Secretary setting out the grounds for opposing the privatisation.

We warned that Cleveland Police Authority failed in many of its statutory duties to consult the people of Cleveland over its plans and also failed to consult UNISON properly under Police Regulations. The fight goes on.

'Back office' myth

When ministers talk about cutting 'wasteful support functions' or 'back office' functions, they show an ignorance of the way in which organisations function in the real world. Those who work in the police service know that forces only work on the back of fine-tuned teamwork between staff and officers on the front-line and those working in less visible roles to support them. And let's not forget that there are 17,500 non-operational police officers in England and Wales who work in the so-called 'back office'. So any criticism of support functions in policing is as likely to impact on these colleagues as on police staff in supporting functions.

UNISON has been disappointed with some recent attacks that have been made on police staff in the press. We believe that it is important that the police workforce, both staff and officers, and those representing them, work together to defend the investment which has been made in policing in recent years. If the workforce becomes divided it will only help those who may be seeking ways to seriously reduce police funding in the government spending review planned for the autumn.

UNISON will work tirelessly to champion the essential role that police staff play in delivering modern policing. We will highlight the importance of teamwork and the specialist skills our members now bring to the Service. Police staff are working flexibly and with great commitment to public service and UNISON intends to make the case for protecting you and your colleagues in the difficult months to come. See opposite page for examples of the important work our members do to deliver high quality policing.

Police staff stars

Police staff do an incredible range of jobs. Yet the Government is handing out budget cuts to police forces that threaten those jobs and the high quality policing they deliver. Here is a selection of the police staff stars who have featured in *Police Profile* in the last two years. They all do jobs that are vital to good policing, either operationally or in terms of public credibility, good working conditions or efficient infrastructure. They demonstrate the varied roles played by police staff and the irreplaceable work they do.



Ellie Beaumont, Staffordshire

Jane's PCSO of the year award 2009: Accompanied a woman bullied by youths on her regular bus route every day for two weeks, even altering her shift pattern to do so, until the problem was resolved. Single-handedly wiped out anti-social behaviour from two cul-de-

sacs by seizing alcohol, collecting litter and organising graffiti removal.



Julie Pitts, Leicestershire

Julie Pitts, occupational health nurse manager, supported by Julie Mayne, occupational health nurse, Sally Westbury healthy living and fitness advisor and Gareth Powell, psychological counsellor. Pioneering new approaches to healthy living and workplace stress.



Vincent Toms, North Wales

Members of the innovatory North Wales Police seized-property team. Vincent Toms and his colleagues, Gillian Needham, Valmai Traynor and Steve Crowther are developing a system where they immediately

know the whereabouts of every cache of property, batch of documents or tape recording. It does not matter if it is on the shelf near their workstation or elsewhere in another division.



Kam Dhillon, Bedfordshire

MBE in 2009: A forensic operations manager, Kam sees the impact of sometimes violent crime at close quarters. He is forward thinking in his outlook: 'You have to keep thinking about what you are trying to achieve and how to do that. We must push back the boundaries and constantly look for solutions.'



Shahina Ahmed, Cambridgeshire

A Muslim, she joined Cambridgeshire Constabulary in 2004 as a specials recruitment co-ordinator and used the recruitment process to encourage hard-to-reach communities to apply to be a special. Supported Rukshana Begum as a special – the first woman

police officer in the country to wear the hi-jab. Hi-jabs were accepted as scales of entitlement on the force's uniform list, partly thanks to Shahina.



John Bond, Northamptonshire

A scientific support manager with Northamptonshire Police and fellow of Leicester University, developed a unique method of revealing finger print evidence where it was previously unobtainable. Led to international acclaim and a breakthrough in a murder investigation in the United States.



Dave Taylor, North Wales

Helicopter pilot Dave Taylor and colleagues, are doing a top notch job for their force. They are in-house, fully committed and flying the flag for North Wales Police.



John Bradley, Hampshire

Fleet manager of the year 2009: 'John Bradley is an individual who was thinking about, and introducing, environmental initiatives and vehicles long before much of the industry was aware of the issue.'

Fleet News editor Stephen Briers.

Sandwell's governor

It's a job she loves and the people she helps love her.
But Nicky Yates is worried about the future

Nicky Yates was just about to run a cyber-bullying class when *Police Profile* caught up with her.

'There are so many worries about internet safety at the moment and kids bullying each other both on texts and on facebook.'

Nicky presses home the key message every time – you must tell someone if you are being bullied.

'I say that if they don't tell anyone they will suffer in silence. But I also give them ideas about being confident and understanding why other people bully.'

'The aim is not to scare children but to make them aware of the basic safety messages. Facebook, for instance has a minimum age of 13. If you are 10 you shouldn't be on there.'

'The talk of cuts worries me. I love this job and I have never had one like it'

The Sandwell, West Midlands PCSO has had strong positive feedback from teachers at the primary schools she visits. In fact at three of them she has been asked to join the governing body as 'community representative'. She is able to do it in work time depending on shifts.

'It gives me a lot of insight into behind-the-scenes stuff and I can give them help if there are any community or parent problems.'

Nicky feels she has a natural rapport with the children. She has had no formal training in schools outreach but says she gets great support from her inspector and sergeant.

Education, however, is just one of her interests. Last year she won a British Association for Women in Policing Award which recognised not only her work in schools but her support for older people.

She was struck by the underused community room at a block of flats for the over-50s in her patch and found



Down with the kids: Nicky with children during a visit to the local police station. After a dog display the children met a new recruit (not eligible for UNISON)

that people socialised very little. A bit of fundraising and the installation of a bingo machine might just make the difference she thought.

Nicky's hunch came off big time. The residents aged from just over 50 to 93 have packed regular bingo sessions. When available they get Nicky in to do the calling.

'It's lovely to see these older people enjoying each other's company and getting out.'

She has organised school choirs to visit homes for older people at Christmas and there are now regular requests to book the choir as December approaches.

For Nicky, a clerical worker for 15 years before becoming a PCSO, there is one dark cloud on the horizon.

'I do hope the PCSOs are here to stay but the talk of cuts worries me. I love this job and I have never had one like it before. It's not really like a job.'

For the people of Sandwell – young and old – however, there is more at stake than Nicky Yates's job satisfaction. There is strong, consistent support for the vulnerable and youngsters. Nothing will replace that if PCSOs disappear.

Workplace learning innovation

An historic agreement between Durham Constabulary and UNISON been hailed by both sides. They have signed up to a union/ employer workplace learning and development agreement.

The force is one of the first in the UK to sign up to such an agreement which shows its commitment to the

learning and development of staff as well as police officers.

The aims are: To fulfil the requirements of the police service national agreement on workforce learning and development, meet recommendations regarding the 'employer's pledge' within the 2006 Leitch report on the review of skills to meet future needs and build on the Government's lifelong learning

initiatives in order to create a culture where learning is seen as integral.

Arthur Dickinson, UNISON's Durham branch secretary, said: 'We are proud to be part of this initiative, together with Durham Police Authority.'

'Learning can help forward thinking organisations to improve the services they provide by developing the staff they have.'