



Scottish Police Federation North Area Committee

Minute of the quarterly meeting of the Scottish Police Federation North Area Committee, held on Monday 2 and Tuesday 3 December 2024, at the Park Inn by Radisson, 1 Justice Mill Lane, Aberdeen AB11 6EQ.

1. Attendance, Opening and Roll Call

Full Time Officials

Allen Shaw	Chair
Caroline Macnaughton	Secretary
Yvonne Sloan	Vice Chair (Apologies)
Andrew Sawers	Deputy Secretary
David Threadgold	Chair (Day 2 only)
Emma-Louise Richardson	AGS, People & Equality
Jennie MacFarlane	Deputy Secretary, West Area (Day 1 only)

Constables	Sergeants	Inspecting Ranks
Mark Douglass	Julie Stephen	Rhona Di Meola
Allen Begg	Geoff Catto	Gillian Donald
Sorcha Burns	Iain Fraser	Lynne Kortland
James Will	Ricky Burr	Simon Lewis-Dalby
Ronnie Irvine	Gary Johnston	Pat Nicoll
Dale Evans	Rob Southern	Kris McCall
Scott Birrell	Ryan Thompson	Calum Smith (Day 1 only)
Ross Polworth	Dayne McDonald	Bruce Crawford

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members present, extending a warm welcome to new Reps Kris McCall and Ricky Burr.

Apologies were received from David Gibson, David Mackay, Paul MacLaren, Kirsten Marshall, Andrew Mackenzie and Robin Brown.

The Chair then advised there would be no Health and Wellbeing presentation as Guest Speaker Diane Clayton, Health and Wellbeing Programme Lead had advised of her unavailability to attend the meeting.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

The previous meeting Minute was formally approved, having been proposed and seconded by Dale Evans and Rob Southern.

3. Guest Speakers – Parenting and Maternity Presentation

The Chair then introduced Emma-Louise Richardson, AGS People & Equality and Jennie MacFarlane, Deputy Secretary, West Area who would now deliver a presentation on Parenting and Maternity. This was followed by a Q&A session.

4. Separate (Rank) Committees

Rank Separate meetings took place.

5. Legal Advice and Assistance

The Secretary gave an update on the number and type of applications for legal advice and / or assistance made by members in the Area since the last meeting.

There are currently 407 live legal advice and assistance files, with 57 closed since the last JCC meeting.

Since the last NAC, for the North Area there have been the following number of legal assistance applications.

On-duty – 7 accepted applications. 2 Personal Injury, 5 Employment Disputes. (4 rejected applications, 3 Employment Disputes and 1 Misconduct).

Off-duty - 4 applications. 4 Criminal Legal Defence. No rejected applications.

There have been £2,997 legal fees reclaimed by the SPF and claims settled of the value of £90,656 between 17 August and 25 November 2024. During this period, there were 49 General Legal Advice calls taken and two of these converted to legal applications.

There were two appeals against rejected applications for SPF legal assistance, one from the West and one from the East. Both were rejected by the JCC, upholding the Deputy General Secretary's original decision to reject the applications.

JCC Legal Advice and Assistance updates –

The last Legal Standing Committee was held on 15 May 2024, the Chair being the Deputy General Secretary, Lorna Cunningham. There have been no further meetings since then.

Discussion around the SOP for BISE and whether it is clear enough. Legally a business interest is classed as only for HIRE / GAIN, not just a hobby or voluntary work. However, PSoS use BISE forms for everything, which is not what they are designed for. SPF is seeking further legal advice around this for clarification. It may need SOP and BISE forms re-wording.

JUDICIAL REVIEWS

- Dismissal of East Area officer based on disclosed matters that related to time well before recruitment. This was upheld in the SPF / officer's favour and the officer has been reinstated.

LEGAL OPINION

- Pension trap, legal opinion has been sought. It has been advised that there is no discrimination for officers being able to retire at the combination of 25 years' service and aged over 50.
- Legal review of the Occupancy Charge contract / form that has been sent to affected officers to sign. The response from legal was that a couple of additional clauses should be added to the contracts to protect the officers' rights in relation to ongoing maintenance of the police-occupied houses. This direction was sent to ACC Bond who has provided a lengthy response. It appears that most officers have now signed the occupancy charge forms. However, an FOI has revealed an integrity issue around the initial information supplied to SPF by PSoS regarding the BIK obligations and reasons for introducing occupancy charge.

6. Divisional Reports

Divisional Rep Rhona Di Meola gave an update on A Division issues. She spoke about issues with RDU offering overtime at inaccurate rates.

Divisional Rep Ross Polworth gave an update on N Division issues. He spoke about ongoing issues regarding plain clothes allowances.

Divisional Rep Ronnie Irvine gave an update on D Division issues. He advised of D Division having to request the authority of an Inspector to make an arrest on warrant before taking to Custody Suite and members are very unhappy about this as it's not a national

policy. He then spoke about a lack of cold weather clothing in D Division and lighting issues in rural stations. Ronnie Irvine also spoke about comments in 1919 magazine around the Force Mobilisation Model which created lots of discussion around the room. He then advised of errors with start dates on Pension Statements.

Action – Kris McCall to collate examples of requests to Inspectors for authority to make arrest on warrant for Secretary to present to Nicky Russell.

Action – Ronnie Irvine to forward details of lack of cold weather clothing to Yvonne Sloan / Gordon Forsyth.

Action – Ronnie Irvine to forward details of lighting issues in rural stations to Allen Shaw / Yvonne Sloan.

7. JCC Sub Committees

The Chair advised the Conduct and Equality Standing Committee met on 14 November 2024.

Conduct

The Chair then gave the following update.

Suspensions (North) – 17
Criminal cases – 38 (23 on duty, 15 off duty)
Conduct cases – 12 (8 on duty, 4 off duty)

No more GMH/MM scheduled for 2024.

Attended a total of 14 for the calendar year – 10 GMH / 4 MM – a variety of outcomes with one dismissal.

He spoke about mobile phone / chat group apps continuing to be a trend and reiterated the need to challenge behaviour such as misogyny.

There was then some discussion around WebEx and who owns the chat thereon.

Action – Deputy Secretary to ascertain who owns WebEx chat.

Action – Sorcha Burns to try and get more information on WebEx.

The Chair then advised Conduct training would hopefully take place in February / March 2025.

Equality

The Deputy Secretary gave the following update.

Grievances - 14

Equality Cases - 15

IH – 40

IHR – 13

The Secretary then advised of a good result with the Dog Unit Grievance cases.

The Common themes for Grievances

- Alleged bullying / unfair treatment.
- Line managers failing to adhere to SOP's and or other guidance.

The new Grievance and Resolving Workplace issues and Mediation service started in July 2024, it is still fairly new and mediation offerings have been quite low but suspect this will increase into next year which should provide early resolution at a quicker pace. There are several ongoing protracted grievances which hopefully will come to a conclusion early next year. Grievances have the ability to shape the future in terms of organisational change, but anyone coming to a local Rep for guidance, please direct them to HR and get in touch with one of the FTOB's.

The Common themes for Equality cases

- Neurodiversity issues.
- FWP.
- General lack of support for ongoing work issues with management.

The Neurodivergent issues and concerns have all been raised at a national level and we, the SPF, have a firm seat at the table. This has also been brought up on a number of occasions to ACC Bond at the North Peoples Board and at our North Area SPF / ACC meetings. There is a clear cross path between Health and Safety and Equality but we must be person focussed for those who have been recruited and this sits foremost as an equality issue.

The Service does not have a duty of care for anyone who has applied for the Police, or who have not yet started their service. The Service already recognise the need to be stronger and that is why recruitment are looking for the criteria to be reviewed. The three Areas have been working with Emma-Louise Richardson (AGS Equality) in this space and there is some positive traction to get this changed.

AGS (Equality) then spoke about working with PSoS recruitment regarding issues with new recruits.

Employment Tribunals

When a member reaches out for assistance with Employment Tribunals, please get in touch with a FTOB first. There is a process to follow and where there is the potential for a legal case, unless time critical (three months less one day from when the issues occurred), legal opinion should be considered before any approach to ACAS. There have been a few cases recently where the officer has gone to ACAS before legal has been approved.

Ill Health (IH)

When dealing with a member who is long term absent (over 28 days), an Ill Health (IH) case should be opened on the SPF database by submitting a Contact Form. This allows SPF to provide extra support and signpost to other options where required. Our role is to support the member to return to work but ensure they are being treated fairly by their line management.

Ill Health Retainment / Retirement (IHR)

When dealing with a member who is considering IHR, there are two options that can be considered, retainment in a role that suits their reasonable adjustments or retirement through Ill Health. It's crucial at an early stage to ascertain what the member is looking for as we can be there to provide them the most up to date guidance on what is achievable or not. It may require a difficult conversation with the member as to what their expectations may be as not all members will be successful in this space. Obtaining the best medical evidence is crucial within the process and can assist later down the line. Advise them to contact HR at the earliest opportunity, as along with ourselves they can provide process guidance. OPTIMA delays continue to cause a lot of additional stress and anxiety for members who are going through these processes. This continues to be escalated within the Service and to OPTIMA through several complaints. We have to work with what we have right now at OPTIMA but they are being challenged on their poor practice.

Duty Modifications Panel

Where a member is unable to carry out duties as a result of a requirement for an adjusted role, they may be put forward to the Duty Modifications Panel where a role which suits their requirements is located. There is a huge link with this space and the potential for ill health retainment / retirement and that has caused a lot of anxiety for affected members. There has been a lot of engagement with SPF on this and as such new processes are now being reviewed.

AGS (Equality) gave an overview of the Duty Modifications Panel advising that suitable roles have to be budgeted roles. Draft guidance has been received from PSoS. There was then lots of discussion around the Duty Modifications Panel.

Efficiency Standing Committee

The Secretary advised the last meeting of the Efficiency Standing Committee was held on 14 November 2024 and then gave the following update.

Update on the Public Order Monitoring Group which was chaired by ACC Ritchie.

- ACC pleased with how the Climate Camp was dealt with in A Division.
- Lots of discussion around Moonbeam and the use of the earpieces was covered.
- ASPS President, Rob Hay, asked where the money was coming from to police the Commonwealth Games, with less than two years to plan the event.

Leadership, Training and Development (LTD)

- Your Leadership Matters training is going to continue – even though our National Chair made representations that it was time to cut the losses and save money. Service don't want to listen to genuine feedback and are just ploughing on with it.
- ACC Mairs has admitted that the Service is trying to hit recruitment numbers by any means, even by lowering standards and abilities and this is storing issues for the future (which we are all very cognisant of and have been for some time!). Brian Jones, Vice Chair commented that PSoS are failing to put a safe system of work in place under Health and Safety legislation and this may be a route forward to tackle the issue. Recent examples of recruits taken on by the Service include: being afraid of blood; can't speak English; neurodiversity issues that will impact on operational ability from Day One. The Service just wanting to hit the target recruitment figure, even if retention is rubbish. On 4 November 2024 the Service hit officer numbers of 16,604.
- The National Chair has a paper for the next JNCC meeting with the Chief Constable around the removal of the entrance test. Any views on this appreciated before the next JNCC.

Special Constabulary

- There were 384 members of the Special Constabulary at last figure. There is a new recruiting campaign. However, there appears to be a bigger budget for PSYV than there is for Special Constables recruitment and yet Special Constables have full warranted powers and more useful for frontline.
- At least two RPU cops that have recently retired have come back as Traffic Special Constables. They have retained their RPU specialisms and don't need re-training in them. However, when their refreshers were due, were told that they were not top of the list as they are Special Constables. If these lapse then will need full training, which seems absurd when they can very easily bolster frontline RPU support and are keen to do so.

Custody and Criminal Justice

- FCI and CRI role now merged against SPF recommendations. This will (is) creating issues already with last minute sickness resulting in no cover and scrambling to find acting up cover.
- The requirement to populate a spreadsheet with CRI / FCI duties has been highlighted as not being compliant with the Workforce Agreement.
- Discussion around the Voluntary Interview Pilot, with the H&S requirements and assessment being met at local police offices, using police devices.

Events and Rostering

- There has been a concession from PSoS that all working rest days will now be rostered for only 8 hours and that anything additional will be overtime. This includes rest days over 91 days re-rostered. Once that is agreed in writing, the next phase will be to get agreement in writing regarding all rostered days for 12 months in advance, to be honoured – ie all rest days to be counted as such, not just those under 91 days' notice.
- Deputy General Secretary has received a paper from PSoS requesting the implementation and approval of 1000 or 1100 hours start time for events, to prevent officers having to start between 0700 – 0900 (as per WFA) when actually not required until later in the day. This will form part of a separately agreed WFA for the specific events. Currently, these start times are not allowed due to contravention of WFA but they do benefit both the officer and the Service re welfare and also financial implications. The paper submitted is not specific enough and will require amendment before agreement.

C3

- FWP spreadsheet still being used to make decisions on approval of flexible working applications, so that they are evenly spread across teams, not being dealt with as individual cases. AGS for Equality & People to write to Service around this FWP spreadsheet.

Post Incident Procedure (PIP)

- AGS for Conduct compiles a list of PIPs for the last 12 months. Request for these to be sent to the Area Secretary (who dealt with it and who has now had experience and exposure of dealing with PIPs). Area Secretaries to send on to Lynne Gray.

Health, Safety and Welfare Standing Committee

The AGS H&S gave the update.

He spoke about the Moodle for fast roads being inadequate and also issues with signs blowing over. He mentioned Operation Moonbeam earpieces and public order officers.

He advised numbers being trained in OST is well below but the recertification period has been extended.

There are issues with clothing / equipment – no money available to significantly update uniform issues. There are new torches being trialled.

He advised the Vehicle Group has been resurrected and spoke about the possible introduction of menstrual toolkits for vehicles.

The National Chair, Vice Chair and AGS H&S all sat in on a presentation on EV battery fires which he described as a phenomenal presentation which he is hoping to bring to Conference.

There was then some discussion around winter kits.

There was then an informal Q&A session with the National Chair regarding the current pay issues.

8. JCC Updates

The Secretary advised the last meeting of the JCC took place on 26 / 27 November 2024.

Finance Standing Committee

The Secretary advised the last meeting of the Finance Standing Committee was held on 12 November 2024 and gave the following update.

At the JCC, the SPF accountants provided an update on their recent audit of SPF accounts, which appeared healthy and no identified concerns. One cost that will be up for debate at the next JCC in February 2025 will be the continuance of 1919 magazine. The current costs (mainly around production) are around £135,000 per annum and there will be discussion around the magazine's future. Request that we have feedback at the NAC around this and views on its future. It will be moving to web-based format which will reduce production costs. Large one off costs of media this year due to production of the Relentless Video, which will be previewed to the JCC in due course. First responses to this are very positive and it will be used pre-election to lobby political parties around policing issues and future manifesto pledges.

Action – The Secretary to forward link to 1919 magazine for onward transmission.

The JCC had a presentation from The Scottish Police Credit Union with the director touting for a financial contribution from the SPF towards the recruitment of a Debt Advisor that could be a useful resource for members. Further discussion around this to be had as the National Chair rightly covered the need for due diligence, a business case and potential tendering of such an option.

Voluntary Fund = £11.18

Legal cover = £6.21

Total = £17.39

This generated lots of discussion around The Scottish Police Credit Union.

JNCC

The Secretary advised the JNCC last met on 5 September 2024.

At the last JNCC with the Chief Constable, there was lots of discussion around recruitment which remains a challenge. It is going to be monitored on the Service “culture dashboard”. The discussions included the concerns around the Duty Modifications Panel and recruitment of people with Protected Characteristics. Points raised that there are hundreds of officers on FWP which is affecting the number of officers that can do nightshift.

Updates around resourcing challenges at C3. The Chief Constable indicated her desire to have a 70:30 ratio of police staff to officers in the Division (as opposed to the current 60:40 split). The SPF indicated that this will not work but were ignored. Chief Constable has told the SPA she will look at all posts that can be civilianised and move officers to the frontline. Some officers are leaving the Service to re-join as a civilian as they will then be paid more eg cybercrime.

Chief Superintendent Emma Croft in OSD is continuing a review of the on-call arrangements of Superintending ranks.

Remote working – Service trying to push all officers back to offices without any equality review or considerations for individual circumstances.

PSoS Reform

BWV and DESC integration is aimed to be rolled out, starting with D Division from March 2025. The National Chair expressed that he would be surprised if it was in place by the time we attend Conference next year.

SPF Training

The Secretary advised proposed dates for Basic training in February 2025.

IOSH training in September and October for new reps and refreshers also.
PIP Refresher Training – Lynne and Brian
Conduct Training – Lynne and Brian and Allen.
Equality / Conduct / H&S Training to be scheduled through the year.

Other JCC Business

Scottish Police Consultative Forum (Arena for discussion of subjects that cannot be negotiated).

The Secretary advised the last meeting was 19 November 2024 and next meeting will be 18 February 2025.

Discussion around the SPF request for the Justice Board to ensure officers can be cited for afternoons at court, to reduce resourcing abstractions.

Vetting of officers and staff was also discussed.

SPA

The Secretary advised the last SPA meeting was 28 November 2024 (when SPF protested in Glasgow outside their office). The Secretary then noted thanks to those who attended the protest.

Scottish Parliament and Political Engagement

The Secretary advised all local councillors on North region islands have been contacted about the housing occupancy charges and sent a copy of the Island Communities Impact Assessment. There has been a request for them to feedback to Police Scotland (and the SPF) around the impact of charging police officers for their accommodation will have on police resources in their area with very few responses received.

The Chair then asked for all Reps to write to their MSPs, if not already done so, regarding the ongoing pay dispute.

SPF Bravery Awards

The Secretary advised the SPF Bravery Awards were held on 27 November 2024 at Dynamic Earth.

This year the North had 6 nominations in the final including: Cops Cop; Team of the Year (two entries); Individual Bravery; Unsung Hero; and Community Commitment. The Secretary advised Rep Ronnie Irvine won two awards – Cops Cop and Team of the Year and the Committee then gave a round of applause. The Secretary also advised the Community Commitment award went to the North – Ally Hutchison.

The JCC have voted for future award ceremonies to be held every other year, alternating

with Conference. Holding them every two years gives more opportunities for more nominations and improves their impact.

9. JCC Circulars and Consultations

The Chair advised of the most recent JCC Circulars and SOPs for Consultations issued since last meeting.

10. Motions

The Chair advised there are no ongoing motions from the North at this time

11. Communication

The Deputy Secretary gave an update and advised the Relentless video is near to completion and first viewings extremely positive

12. Correspondence

The Secretary advised there are no notable items of correspondence other than a thank you from Cara Riley for the NAC Charitable Donation for Maggie's Dundee.

13. AOCB

The Chair advised there was no other competent business.

The Secretary then reiterated the offer of anyone wishing to observe at a JCC meeting to please inform the Secretary and permission would be requested.

The Secretary then asked for feedback from North around SC06/SC07 calls at C3 being offloaded and recorded at Division and off the C3 lists.

She also asked that any breaches of WFA to all be reported to the Area Secretary who will feed them back to the Deputy General Secretary who will be writing to the Service in relation to each of them.

14. Closure

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the North Area Committee is to be held on 3 and 4 March 2025 at the Park Inn by Radisson, Aberdeen. He then stated the dates for future meetings in 2025.

2 / 3 June 2025

1 / 2 September 2025

1 / 2 December 2025

The Chair thanked the Committee for their active and constructive participation and closed the Meeting. He was thanked by the meeting in the customary manner.

Allen Shaw

Chair

Caroline Macnaughton

Secretary