



## Scottish Police Federation North Area Committee

Minute of the quarterly meeting of the Scottish Police Federation North Area Committee, held on Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 March 2025, 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 (Apologies)
Yvonne Sloan	Vice Chair
Andrew Sawers	Deputy Secretary
David Kennedy	General Secretary (Day 2)

Constables	Sergeants	Inspecting Ranks
Mark Douglass Allen Begg Sorcha Burns James Will Ronnie Irvine Dale Evans Ross Polworth Robin Brown Andrew MacKenzie	Julie Stephen Geoff Catto Iain Fraser Gary Johnston Ryan Thompson Dayne McDonald Paul MacLaren	Rhona Di Meola Gillian Donald Lynne Kortland Simon Lewis-Dalby Kris McCall David Gibson Calum Smith Bruce Crawford

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members present. He advised David Kennedy, General Secretary will attend on Day 2.

Apologies were received from Caroline Macnaughton, Ricky Burr, Pat Nicoll, Rob Southern, Scott Birrell and David Mackay.

## **2. Minute of Previous Meeting**

The previous meeting Minute was formally approved, having been proposed and seconded by Gillian Donald and Ryan Thompson.

The Chair then advised on outstanding actions and the Vice Chair gave an update on clothing.

## **3. Guest Speakers**

The Chair advised there were no guest speakers for this meeting.

## **4. Separate (Rank) Committees**

Rank Separate meetings took place. The Chair emphasised there should be discussion around the recent pay deal.

## **5. Legal Advice and Assistance**

The Deputy 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 468 live legal advice and assistance files, with 20 closed since the last JCC meeting.

Since the last NAC, for the North Area there have been the following number of legal assistance applications between 26 November 2024 and 31 January 2025.

On-duty – 3 accepted applications. 1 Personal Injury, 1 Employment Dispute and 1 criminal legal defence.

Off-duty - 3 applications – all 3 for Criminal Legal Defence.

There have been £2,773.88 legal fees reclaimed by the SPF and claims settled to the value of £452,643.79 between 26 November 2024 and 31 January 2025. During this period, there were 25 General Legal Advice calls taken and two of these converted to legal applications.

There have been seven interviews supported since the last JCC.

There was one appeal against rejected applications for SPF legal assistance – from the West. This was rejected by the JCC, upholding the Deputy General Secretary's original decision to reject the application.

## **JCC Legal Advice and Assistance updates –**

PUBLIC INQUIRY – solicitor Anwar requesting that the Terms of Reference are extended and this went to the Scottish Government. It was determined that what he was requesting was already covered in the current case / claim. The Chief Constable had raised an Interdict to prevent the terms of reference from being extended, the SPF supported this, however it has now been withdrawn as Anwar and the First Minister have now shared the information they had.

Concern raised by the SPF to the Service around “anti-racist” training which refers to the inquiry case, pre-judging the outcome. Head of People Services, Katy Miller, now says it is all about individuals, not the organisation. The SPF had not been consulted on this training.

Seeing extra legal expenses from Police Appeals Tribunals to provide support to officers at these.

There have been a few Personal Injury Claim cases that have been time-barred and not accepted as the cases were submitted too late and accident investigation reports not submitted on time.

### **LEGAL OPINION**

The Chair gave the update.

- Pension trap, legal opinion has been sought. The initial opinion is not encouraging with regards to being able to successfully challenge this, it is the rules of the Scheme. Whilst it is agreed it is not fair, it is not discriminatory if it is shown to be a proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim. The full legal advice is still to be received. 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.

For officers required to give evidence at a Fatal Accident Inquiry, legal support will only be provided by SPF to officers that are likely to receive criticism, not likely to get this as routine.

## **6. Divisional Reports**

Divisional Rep Kris McCall gave the following update on D Division issues.

A report was prepared for D Division SLT in relation to the requirement to seek authorisation from Inspectors to take arrested persons to custody. Following this the directive was reversed and autonomy given to Inspectors to manage their teams

appropriately in order to promote the use of direct measures and reduce use of custody as a disposal. This has been well received by members of all ranks.

In January there was an apparent up take in officers being cited for High Court during their annual leave. A meeting was held with Superintendent Smith in relation to this and the preferred position seems to be for officers to take their leave and be under no obligation to be contacted as the Service has not correctly cited them. Although an opposing example was given where an officer was instructed to be on duty for multiple days while a trial floated, and the overtime and expenses were paid.

Reports continued to be received in relation to the poor state of the Divisional estate. The point at Forfar station has been stood down after five months. Repairs are ongoing to the roof of the Montrose office, but this has resulted in water ingress. The Carnoustie office is temporarily closed for a full refurbishment.

SLT are looking to restructure Local Policing, returning to a Response and Community Inspector model. A meeting has been arranged for 31 March 2025, where various proposals will be discussed.

Reps, along with the North Area Secretary, held a meeting with Chief Superintendent Russell on 26 February 2025, which discussed the removal of policing from non-statutory events, Chief Superintendent Russell will be seeking out central budgets for football duties.

The trial use of Webex for SPF communication continues. It has been well received and now reaches approximately 800 officers. Ronnie Irvine and Dale Evans to liaise with Reps in A and N Divisions regarding use across those Divisions too.

Fleet issues were highlighted – Angus CID had only one electric vehicle due to vehicles being off service and had no charger resulting in paying high fees to charge in public bays. Bigger issue about why no leaders in CID felt empowered to make a decision to rectify this.

Only access to police public space CCTV is in Dundee, resulting in officers having to travel further to carry out reviews, losing CCTV evidence etc.

Annual Leave blocks have been imposed on CID officers in preparation for Force Mobilisation Model – brings them in line with uniformed colleagues.

There is no Post Incident Procedures suite in Tayside now that Baluniefield is closed.

ARVs continue to assist Division with certain enquiries such as Missing Persons, Citations etc and their OBL has increased from five to six.

Body Worn Video Camera delivery program is underway with camera hardware installed in some stations. Training due to be undertaken at end of March start of April 2025.

Divisional Rep Julie Stephen advised there are no issues within A Division, however Sorcha Burns spoke about IT issues regarding maternity / KIT days.

Divisional Rep Ross Polworth gave an update on N Division issues. He spoke about ongoing issues with resourcing, overtime and payment of plain clothes allowances.

## **7. JCC Sub Committees**

The Chair advised the Conduct and Equality Standing Committee met on 14 November 2024, although there was a Conduct meeting just last week.

### **Conduct**

The Chair gave updates on Suspensions and live Criminal / Conduct cases.

Nationally, suspensions are through the roof. Request from the AGS Conduct for notification of all suspensions prior to them taking place. PSD agreed that there would be no Hearings over Christmas. However, despite objections from the SPF they served full Reg 15 Misconduct Packs before and during the festive period, which left officers trying to prepare responses over the holidays for upcoming meetings in January / February 2025 – which was unacceptable.

Contact with PIRC re enquiries and cases should come via AGS. PIRC now saying enquiries will take up to nine months.

He gave an update on the WhatsApp case and also spoke about vetting which generated lots of discussion.

## **Equality**

The Deputy Secretary gave the following update.

Grievances - 9

Equality Cases - 9

IH – 42

IHR – 14

Common themes with Grievances – bullying, unfair treatment remains to be the main issues, Line Managers not following SOPs.

Common themes for Equality cases – neurodiversity issues continue to be a problem.

He spoke about Probationers at SPC who have failed part of their training to receive a week's enhanced training prior to going to Reg 9 Discharge Hearing.

He advised a SLWG has been established to review problematic cases and ascertain if Optima are breaching their contractual obligations as there are so many issues now arising with the company.

He spoke about the Duty Modifications Panel pushing officers towards IHR – reviewing whether this is discriminatory if they are already at work in a modified role so able to operate in some capacity in employment. So far, 107 cases have been referred to the Panel. Out of 36 females and 55 males, with an average age of 44 years, 21 have been referred for IHR. They are now allowing Reps to accompany officers to the Panel to support them. There was then some discussion around the Duty Modifications Panel.

The Deputy Secretary then advised delays continue with Access to Work applications with some into the six months stage which means officers are being held back – we have now escalated through HR and the National Wellbeing Team as it is now a risk to the organisation by not implementing these.

He advised there has been an instruction to Area Commanders in the North to ensure that robust reviews are carried out of FWP's as the Service is struggling to cope with the sheer volume of staff carrying these and there is evidence of overtime being paid within some business areas to cover the shortfall created.

He finished by advising of upcoming Wellbeing Events in Kittybrewster and Orkney.

## **Efficiency Standing Committee**

The Vice Chair gave a brief update advising AGS H&S reported from the Uniform Group that there had been a meeting to find funds to buy "cosy jackets", to turn capital into revenue but decided they couldn't find this money after all.

She advised that assaults within Custody had reduced, intimating this could be as a result of the different pathways we can now go down – mental health pathway and interviews at stations.

She also spoke about confusion with the memo that had gone out about “holding custodies or not”, advising that a further memo will go out clarifying the situation.

She gave an update on success of the Strontian Police housing issue where housing is well below standard.

### **Health, Safety and Welfare Standing Committee**

The Vice Chair gave the following update.

Deep Dive on Divisional frontline policing submitted to Police Scotland – copy circulated across the NAC for information.

Highlights of this are:

- STOs, 49% didn’t want to train as STOs, with up to 60% in J Division.
- OST, generally officers want to increase frequency of training, more training equates to less injuries.
- 60% of officers reported exposure to traumatic incidents on a regular basis. Due to reduced resourcing levels, it is the same officers experiencing this on a more regular basis.
- OBLs – 18% think they are met on a daily basis but 60% think they are rarely met. In D Division, 35% said they are never met.

This Deep Dive came on the back of the HMICS report on frontline policing, assessed on three different Divisions, meaning that six Divisions have now been reviewed with the same results coming out from all Areas. Gives a wider sample and more meaningful results.

There has been no response from PSoS to the HMICS report yet.

There will be two Health and Safety inspections being done in OSD – the Dog Section and Road Policing. The Vice Chair thanked Rep Lynne Kortland for the excellent work on H&S Inspections in A Division.

## **8. JCC Updates**

The last meeting of the JCC took place on 4 / 5 January 2025 with the Finance Standing Committee meeting held on 21 January 2025. The Deputy Secretary then gave the following update.

## **PSoS Reform**

He advised BWV and DESC integration is aimed to be rolled out, starting with D Division, from March 2025. The Chair had previously expressed that he would be surprised if it was in place by the time we attend Conference. It appears that D Division have set the date for starting to roll out BWV training of “champions” as the first date of our Conference – to avoid us stating there is still no start date. Champions will then train others. The completion date for the project is set for 2027 and nothing has been said to indicate that the BWV would replace corroboration. The technology for syncing the cameras and swiping access to them with warrant cards is still not in place in police stations.

He advised DESC system is now being rolled out to East as North is completed, although there are still some connectivity issues which BT are trying to sort out.

He advised that C Division are running a pilot looking at distinct separate roles for Community and Response, as are D Division.

He advised of discussion around mental health board and the updates they give, the National Chair sits on this. Police are still trying to solve the health crisis and the main partner in this, which is inappropriate. In Arran and Lanarkshire, they have a “safe space” to take clients to and leave with partners. Points raised about the volume of diverted calls that bounce back to C3.

He spoke about Merseyside Police having the Right Person, Right Care policy but PSoS will not buy into this as the legislation has the requirement for police to deal with “welfare” in it within policing. The handover piece is still the biggest issue with no solution.

Regarding officers’ mental health, DCC Spiers said it is a “cluttered landscape”. PSoS have not given a penny to Lifelines charity in the last year and TRiM is not believed to be working and can be detrimental.

There was then lots of discussion around TRiM.

**Action – The Deputy Secretary to advise on TRiM in three Divisions to take to National Chair.**

**Action – Kris McCall to distribute information to NAC re TRiM.**

He advised ESN – the Emergency Services Network, has been re-tendered for car and mobile devices. The Airwave switch off, which was due to take place in 2019, is now predicted not to happen until 2030 and has been delayed due to the Motorola appeal against the Monopolies conviction.

The Vice Chair then gave an update on digital policing, speaking about Digivans and Digidogs, which generated lots of discussion.



## **SPF Training**

The Chair advised Basic Training took place on 26 / 27 February 2025 which a few of the new Reps attended and said it gave a good overview in a relaxed style. The Chair spoke about Conduct Training – still awaiting dates from AGS Conduct.

The Secretary spoke about future Equality Training.

The Vice Chair advised of possible Health and Safety Training in June 2025.

The Chair advised PIP Refresher Training for FTOBs taking place in April. There was then some discussion around PIP training.

## **Other JCC Business**

### **Scottish Police Consultative Forum**

The Chair advised this is an arena for discussion of subjects that cannot be negotiated and are attended by members of SPF Executive, with the last meetings being held on 19 November 2024 and 18 February 2025, where the discussion was predominantly around the Ethics Bill (PECS), which will probably implement the remaining recommendations of Dame Elish Angoloni.

The Chair spoke about wanting to speed up Misconduct proceedings, wanting Gross Misconduct Hearings held in public and having legally qualified Chairs for such meetings. The SPF want to have alternatives to suspension included within the Regulations and also have independent investigators – take it away from Police and PSD, to satisfy the public.

This generated lots of discussion around the Ethics Bill and Misconduct Hearings.

### **Action – The Chair to invite Lynne Gray, AGS Conduct to future NAC meeting re PECS Bill.**

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 Deputy Secretary advised the last SPA meetings were 28 November 2024 and 20 February 2025. There are two meetings – the Resources Committee and the People Board.

The People Board covered mental health and suicide prevention day and discussed Wellbeing Champions and the rise in TRiM referrals, including those for dealing with fatal

RTCs.

The SPA Health and Safety dashboard is available to view online on the SPA website and shows a rise in police assaults particularly in vehicles and on NHS premises.

At the Resources Committee there was discussion around budgets and pay. Budgeted for 3% pay rise this year and saying that the Service have no “bottom drawer” to find any additional finances for the pay rise. Legal settlements are a major cost to the Service and the SPA are going to do a Deep Dive on this – in private session, not public.

### **EuroCOP & ICPRA**

The Chair advised SPF Executive attended last EuroCOP meeting on 5 November 2024, where there was lots of discussions around the right to strike and pay and conditions comparatively across Europe. He advised meetings will be online in the future to reduce travel costs and will be paid for by individual members. The next meeting will be 15 / 16 April 2025 in Rhodes.

Next ICPRA meeting will be in Canada in June 2026.

### **Police Related Charities**

Police Children’s Charity – The Chair reminded about those going through ill health retirement that their kids can benefit from this, also officers that suffer the death of a spouse. Currently supporting over 200 families.

Police Treatment Centre – The Chair advised their website has been re-branded. Don’t forget you can apply for weekend breaks at both centres. Physio now a three week wait and six week wait for wellbeing course at Auchterader.

There have been complaints about a move from Hands-On physiotherapy at the centre but not seeing this recorded in the feedback forms that are completed by the attendees, which is required to evidence the complaints.

## **9. JCC Circulars and Consultations**

The Deputy Secretary 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 advised of a trial in D Division and Div Rep Ronnie Irvine gave a brief update on the trial of Webex for local area communications, which has received very positive feedback, and will hopefully be rolled out to A and N Divisions.

The Deputy Secretary gave an update on the Relentless video which is complete and there will be a VIP preview to MSPs and councillors in Glasgow and Edinburgh and the official launch to press will be on the first day of Conference, when it will go out on social media.

## **12. Correspondence**

The Chair advised this is the last meeting for Rep Gary Johnston who is emigrating to Australia. The Chair then thanked Gary for his contribution to the NAC meetings over the years. The Committee then showed their appreciation with a round of applause and good wishes for the future.

The Deputy Secretary advised that Inspector Kirsten Marshall has stood down from her position as N Division Inspector – she had not managed to participate in the SPF Divisional Rep duties to date and is regretful that she will not be able to take up her post but wishes well to whoever fills this post. We will hold elections in due course for these vacancies.

## **13. AOCB**

The Chair introduced David Kennedy, General Secretary who has attended to give a PNBS update. This was followed by a Q & A session.

The Chair reiterated the need for potential questions for the Chief Constable at Conference.

He asked for suggestions to take forward for future Deep Dives which the Secretary will collate and forward to the Vice Chair, Brian Jones.

The Chair then advised at the next meeting in June there will be an election for the Secretary of the North position. Nominations for this position will need to be notified in writing to the Secretary at least 28 days before the election. Further information on this can be received from any of the North FTOBs.

Anyone wishing to observe at a JCC meeting please inform the Secretary and permission would be requested.

The Deputy Secretary then spoke about floating trials and there was discussion around rostered shifts.

## **14. Closure**

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the North Area Committee is to be held on 2 and 3 June 2025 at the Park Inn by Radisson, Aberdeen. He then stated the dates for future meetings in 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

**Andy Sawers**

Deputy Secretary