

Under Cover

NCA: Protecting those who protect the public

Issue 11 / October 2019

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PENSIONS RULING UPDATE ■ NCA FUNDING BID ■ MEMBERS' NEWS

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The Editor reserves the right to amend or edit all material as necessary, and where possible, with the consent of the contributor. **Under Cover Magazine** would like to thank everyone involved in producing this magazine, especially advertisers and those kind enough to make a contribution.

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Major progress for NCOA members

Issue 11 of **Under Cover** is upon us and it is hard to see where the time has gone since first publishing this bespoke magazine in May 2014. In that five years, the NCOA has reported upon some pretty big issues affecting members, but no previous editions come close to the contents of this.

The NCOA recognises that protecting the public and investigating the most serious crime doesn't fit into a 9-5 day. Of course there are times that we have to 'work on' to see the job done properly. NCOA's 'Pay to Stay' understands the unique nature the Agency plays, but encourages members to ensure they are properly compensated for their hard work and dedication.

The NCOA has consistently striven to ensure that the care and rehabilitation of members is central to workforce wellbeing. I'm delighted to report that Simon Boon succeeded in his efforts to secure NCA admittance into the Police Rehabilitation Centre (PRC) at Goring-on-Thames. This historic decision by the PRC trustees followed lengthy negotiations, and opens the door to all NCA staff receiving an unrivalled quality of rehabilitation, physiotherapy and wellbeing in a state-of-the-



art, 14-acre complex in Oxfordshire. In addition to the NCOA's previously negotiated membership of the North West Police Benevolent Fund, it means that every single officer now has easy access to the finest health care provisions across the UK.

The recent FBU Ruling saw a groundbreaking judgment that Government-imposed changes to civil service pensions in 2015 were age discriminating and unlawful. While this ruling is still in its infancy, the NCOA is in direct contact with the Civil Service Pensions Team at the Cabinet Office and began meeting them in September to discuss how the implications of the finding may be transferred back into tangible compensation to affected members.

My continued thanks to all those who read and contribute to the making of your magazine and once again acknowledging those who report to me with their uplifting and sometimes heart-aching stories in Members' News.



Simon Bashford
Editor

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Sad to report...

Under Cover is sad to report that the following members have recently passed away:

Tom Collins, 37, from Exeter (formerly Bristol) who lost a lengthy fight with a brain tumour. Tom was truly inspirational to all who knew him and is sadly missed by wife Gemma and daughter Koa to whom Under Cover sends condolences (see more in Members News).

Rhubee Ramuth, 51, from Spring Gardens will be missed by all of her International colleagues following her untimely death from lung cancer in July this year. The NCOA have been in close contact with her family at this difficult time to assist where we can.

David Conboy, 55, retired from North West Hub. David passed away suddenly at home. He is remembered affectionately by colleagues from the NCS and SOCA and is sadly missed by his wife Nicola and children Lucy and Matthew. Our thoughts are with you all.

Paul Chandler, 51, from Spring Gardens, died tragically early while abroad on holiday. Sadly missed by colleagues and partner Zara.

Helping us to help you

The NCOA's ability to keep members up to date with important communications relies on having accurate data recorded. Under Cover has an appeal from Membership, to make sure all members update their records whenever your circumstances have changed.

The NCOA needs to know about changes to personal emails, home address, work location and grade. Please email your updated information to membership@ncoa.org.uk so that we can help you stay in touch.

Workplace Reps Brighton training

June this year saw seven members undertake an intensive, week-long training course in Brighton, delivered by a team of very experienced accredited trainers, to become an NCOA Workplace Rep.

The attendees were required to undertake extensive classroom based learning and practical assessments. The course was overseen by the NCOA's Union Learning Representative, Pete Almond, and National Casework Officer Andy Myers. It covered a wide range of topics including NCA Policy, NCOA Establishment and Structure, Procedures, NCOA Policies, Casework, Grievances, Employment Law, H&S, The Equality Act and member recruitment.

The course was delivered at a fantastic venue – The Friends Meeting House – which will

welcome the NCOA again when we return with the Annual Delegates Conference in October 2019.

NCOA President Simon Bashford, General Secretary Simon Boon and National Officer Steve Bond all attended, along with NCOA Chair Nick Edwards, to impart some of their extensive knowledge and experience.

It was extremely pleasing to see the dedication and attitude shown by all the attendees who are welcomed as new representatives to the ranks of the NCOA.

There are limited places available to volunteer as a Workplace Rep, so if you believe you have the ability to help your union and represent your colleagues, please email membership@ncoa.org.uk with your name and a very short precis around your expression of interest.

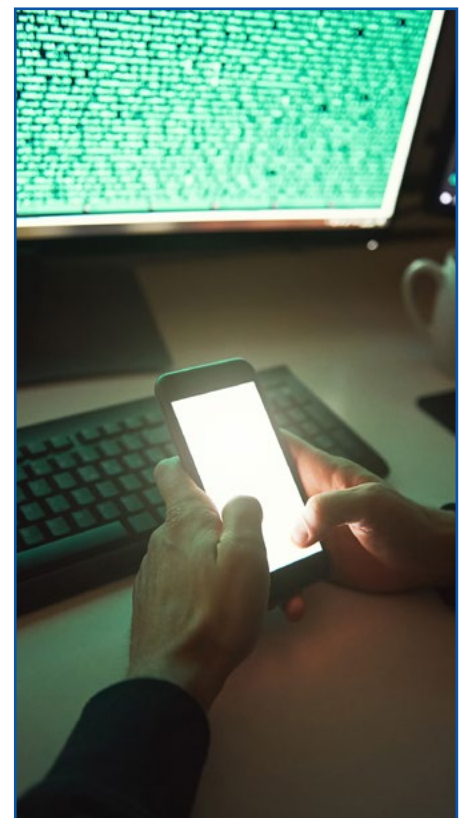
The NCOA won't be held to ransom

The NCA continues to investigate the cyber attack (ransomware) that hit so many law enforcement organisations earlier this year. An aggressive cyber attack that had a ransom message attached infected numerous IT systems across the law enforcement world.

The NCOA has always placed great importance on IT protection, and a substantial investment a couple of years ago meant that no PII data was lost, and full service was recovered within 48 hours following a bespoke business continuity plan for service recovery.

The NCOA continues to work alongside the NCA to assist them in identification of the cyber criminals, and with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) with their data breach investigations.

Cyber security is an issue that we take extremely seriously and subject to review on a regular basis.



Picture © Dima Sidelnikov / Shutterstock

CBD oil: what is it, and can you use it?

Previous Home Secretary Sajid Javid announced that specialist doctors in the UK would be able to legally prescribe cannabis-derived medicinal products.

Cannabis is currently a controlled drug as classified by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. A follow-up to this law, the Misuse of Drugs Regulations Act 2001, placed it under Schedule 1, which is the category for substances with no medicinal value, and is the schedule that was considered by the review.

The use of CBD (cannabidiol) oil is believed to have significant therapeutic benefits and offers relief from a variety of conditions such as Alzheimer's, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's and some cancers. It is also widely purported to alleviate the impact of anxiety, depression, insomnia and even general pain. CBD is widely available on the intranet and over the counter in the UK, with government standards around the removal of the psychoactive element and the strength of the product. However, some products do not meet these standards.

An employer cannot tell their



Picture © El Roi / Shutterstock

employees not to take something that is legally available in the UK; increasingly however, police forces and other law enforcement bodies are advising staff to exercise caution before considering its use.

While NCA policy is currently silent on the issue, there's no guarantee that someone using such an 'unregulated' product with the best intentions wouldn't give a positive reading for cannabis if they were the subject of a Professional Standards random drug test.

Whether a drug is legal or not, it is the responsibility of the individual to

ensure that they are fit for duty. If CBD is prescribed by a GP, and there is evidence that the CBD used has been obtained from a pharmacy and passed the scrutiny of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence as suitable for medical use, then they may wish to consider informing the employer in confidence.

In any other circumstances, the use of unregulated medicines is ill advised. The NCOA will be raising the issue with the Agency to define their policy on the use of CBD oil.

GP24 – access for everyone, everywhere, anytime

Access to an NHS GP is becoming increasingly difficult. NCOA partners Philip Williams & Co can now provide you and your loved ones with access to a practising GP 24/7.

GP24 is a private GP service that enables you to speak in confidence by phone or video consultation to a qualified practising GP, without waiting for an NHS appointment. GP24 is provided in partnership with Medical Solutions who have been providing high-quality GP services since 1998. They are the most experienced provider guaranteeing unlimited 24/7 access to practising GPs either by phone, video consultation or via the GP24 app from anywhere in the world.

Within your appointment, the GP will recommend the



best course of treatment or action; should the GP feel you would benefit from prescription medication, they can have the medication delivered to you at any UK address.

The costs of the drugs and medicines are chargeable at

wholesale rates, which will be told to you before they are issued. Where appropriate the GPs can issue private open referral letters and private fit notes. Each consultation is secure and confidential, and there is no limit to the number or length of consultations.

For full details of this excellent service for NCOA members and co-habiting partners only, visit www.ncoa.org.uk/membership and read Medical Solutions Service Information.

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Being out of time for EAT can be costly

Apart from a 2003 Denzel Washington thriller and a 1966 hit for Chris Farlowe (the editor is old enough to remember!), 'out of time' shouts Employment Tribunal (ET)!

NCOA reps are consistently instructed about meeting deadlines in relation to grievance and ET rules. So should an extension of time be given for filing an Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) appeal when supporting documents were four weeks late? No, held the EAT, on the facts in *Acetrip v Dogra*.

Dogra had previously won a claim for automatically unfair dismissal against Acetrip, who subsequently appealed to the EAT via their counsel, but the appeal was not received in time.

Counsel explained to the EAT



that, as the deadline approached, he [counsel] made every effort to submit the required paperwork but was frustrated by other important matters and so engaged a third party to submit on his behalf. However, the required copies of the ET1 and ET3 were not sent to the EAT at all on that day.

The judge ruled that the failure to send the ET1 and ET3 on the day required, or as soon as possible afterwards, was the result of carelessness or lack of sufficient attention to the matter of timings, which does not amount to a 'good reason or exceptional circumstances'. The extension was therefore refused, and the appeal dismissed.

The failure to comply with specific submission timelines cost the appellant £124,658 – a sobering lesson and one that everyone needs to be conscious of when considering such a serious undertaking.

If you are unsure of required time limits in respect of grievance, an ET claim or appeal, please speak to your workplace rep or email membership@ncoa.org.uk

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Can a **prenup** protect your **pension**?

Experienced lawyer Nicola Wilburn-Shaw tells us why many are choosing this option today – and explores whether such measures are as effective as people think



Not too many years ago, premarital or prenuptial agreements – known as prenups – were the preserve of Hollywood stars, those fabulously rich people keen to protect their fortunes from their latest husband or wife. Today however, they are much more common.

What is a prenup?

A prenup is an agreement entered into by two adults who wish to be married, and both of whom desire to avoid or reduce future conflict and cost. It's entered into at a time when both parties are positive, and communicating in an honest and open manner.

Why have a prenup?

Prenups are useful if one party has significant assets and wants to ensure that their financial contribution is taken into account, should there be a divorce in the future following the marriage.

Are they legally binding?

In the strict understanding of the term, no. However, in the well-publicised case of *Radmacher v Granatino* [2010] the Supreme Court held that, in certain circumstances, these agreements will be held to have decisive weight in deciding the financial terms of any divorce settlement.

In January 2010, the Law Commission produced a consultation paper provisionally proposing that if marital agreements are introduced into law, the following requirements will need to have been met for them to be legally binding:

- both parties have obtained independent legal advice
- the agreement is in writing
- the party seeking to enforce the agreement must have made full and frank financial disclosure
- the agreement should provide for the needs of any children of the family
- the terms of the agreement are fair and should not leave one party reliant on state benefits
- there was a sufficient period of time between the signing of the agreement and the wedding
- neither party was under duress.

Bear in mind that if you do go to court to decide how your financial assets will be divided, the judge has a wide discretion. There is no fixed proportion of assets in English law that must be shared with your spouse on divorce. If the parties disagree as to the division of assets, the law tries to provide a fair outcome for everybody. Consideration will be given to each party's financial resources, such as the value of your home, any mortgage, your incomes, savings and pensions.

Nicola is a highly experienced family lawyer, with a particular aptitude for high-value and multi-asset financial disputes. She is a partner with McAlister Family Law www.mcalisterfamilylaw.co.uk

Can I protect my pension in a prenup?

Pensions are often overlooked when couples consider what they deem to be their financial assets, but for an NCOA member, it might be the most valuable financial asset you have. It is possible to make provision in a prenup for the protection of your pension, and if that prenup is prepared properly, with separate solicitors advising each of you, the agreement is likely to withstand any claim by either of you. If it is not fair – that is, it does not allow for each party's needs to be met – it might be challenged.

What if I'm already married and want to protect my pension in case of divorce?

Postnuptial agreements are entered into after marriage. They work on the same basis as a prenup. In the case of both pre- and postnuptial agreements, it is vital you seek the advice of an experienced family lawyer.



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Government **loses** right to appeal **pensions ruling**

What will the ruling mean for NCOA members in the NCA?

Pension schemes for public sector workers and taxpayers are set to be remedied, the Government has confirmed, following a landmark ruling (McCloud judgment) found the 2015 reform to the judges' and firefighters' pension schemes to have been discriminatory. This includes public pension schemes for NHS workers, members of the police, and fire and rescue workers.

The ruling found that changes made to judges' and firefighters' pensions in 2015 were discriminatory, a decision which will now see the Government remedy the policy across the rest of the public sector.

The Government's application to the Supreme Court for permission to appeal against the ruling was denied, so the finding of age discrimination stands; this will affect members of other civil service employment including police and NCA staff.

Does the ruling affect me?

Under the 2015 pension changes, those who were 10 years from retirement (as of April 2012) were protected from the reforms, under 'transitional protection' and remained on their existing scheme.

Those members who are younger in service fell into two groups:

- 1:** Those within 10-15 years until normal pension age would transition to the new scheme between 2015-2022
- 2:** Those with more than 15 years to work until normal pension age had to move across in April 2015

The ruling will mean that those younger members of staff in the second of these two groups are now entitled to have their benefits 'levelled up' – so that they are treated as having the same protection as the older members – until a non-discriminatory amendment can be made.

This may include considerations around:

- determining whether the ALPHA Scheme or the PPS 2015 will be subject to changes as a result of this ruling
- whether affected officers will be placed back into their respective 'pre-2015 schemes'

“The NCOA has been in direct contact with the Civil Service Pensions Team at the Cabinet Office and met with them on September 19. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the McCloud judgment on behalf of our membership.”

At the time of the ruling, Elizabeth Truss, the former Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said: “The Government respects the Court's decision and will engage fully with the Employment Tribunal to agree how the discrimination will be remedied.”

Despite this statement, initial estimates suggest that to remedy the discriminatory pension changes could exceed £4bn each year to the scheme liabilities from 2015.

What happens next?

The matter has been referred back to an Employment Tribunal for a 'remedy hearing' where the matter will be formally concluded. Given the unequivocal ruling, the Government will be working to ensure their schemes comply with the law and that the transitional changes introduced in 2015 are changed significantly or removed.

- whether affected members may be compensated
- whether affected officers will be given a choice on any of the above.

The NCOA has been in direct contact with the Civil Service Pensions Team at the Cabinet Office and met with them on September 19. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the McCloud judgment on behalf of our membership.

While the legal process is ongoing, formal consultation is not appropriate at this time, but we hope to understand first-hand how the Government will respond to the impact of the ruling and the potential tangible benefits which may be transferred to NCOA members.

NCOA will publish future updates via www.ncoa.org.uk/news

Pay to Stay – because you're

NCA pay has been a hot topic and divisive issue for a number of years, and nothing more so than the introduction of Spot Rates. While the Agency took the bold step of implementing a divergent pay strategy, it did so with the support of the Government and the input of the NCA Remuneration Review Body (NCARRB). It introduced some new operating procedures and also retained a number of policies to ensure consistency in the application of all matters related to pay.

With all that in mind, it seems rather bizarre how frequently the term 'non-overtime role' is bandied about, often with an air of absolute confidence which convinces some that such roles exist.

On March 1 this year, TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady revealed some startling facts:

- more than five million UK workers put in a total of two billion unpaid hours in 2018
- UK companies claimed £32.7bn of free labour last year through workers' unpaid overtime
- more than five million people put in an average of 7.5 hours a week in unpaid overtime during 2018 – on average, that's equivalent to having £6,532 taken out of individual pay packets.

Ms O'Grady added: "It's not okay for bosses to steal their workers' time. Lots of us are willing to put in a few extra hours when it's needed, but too many employers are taking advantage. Overworking staff hurts productivity, leaves workers' stressed and exhausted, and eats into time that should be spent with

family and friends."

It would be nice to think that none of this really concerns the NCA, as it is a good employer – isn't it?

What we have discovered within the Agency, perhaps crystallised by the new pay structures, is that large groups of officers are being told that they cannot submit overtime claims, there's no overtime budget and that overtime is restricted to more 'operational' roles.

More importantly, staff are often reluctant to challenge this position for fear of being identified as a trouble maker. The net result is that officers from Grades 3 to 6 often feel pressurised to work additional hours for no additional compensation, or compensation which does not reflect policy.

So what exactly does NCA policy say on the matter? Is it clear that some roles are exempt?

Working Arrangements and Leave HR02 (V14), Section 4.1 states: 'There is no contractual right or obligation to work overtime... it must be authorised in advance... Compensation through payment or the accrual of time of in lieu is available for each 15-minute period.'

Importantly, where flexi-time appears to have morphed into the only acceptable solution, the Operating Procedure Managing Working Time HR02 OP01 (v15) is quite clear: 'Flexi-time must not be used as an alternative to overtime... The overtime facility should be used rather than allowing officers to build up flexi-credit.'

Of relevance, officers at Grades 3 to 6 inclusive are entitled to request payment or time off in lieu

(TOIL) for overtime worked at the time overtime is offered.

HR02 SD01 FAQs working hours states the following: 'The normal expectation is that overtime will be paid. Officers can request that the overtime compensation is awarded as TOIL, but this requires prior approval from the manager authorising the overtime working.'

So, given all this clarity, which is in very clear English, why are some managers and departments simply not supporting claims for overtime? Moreover, why are they telling staff, or permitting the existence of a culture which perpetuates the idea, that the myth of the non-overtime role is a fact?

worth it!

Pay to Stay

There is no such thing
as a **non-overtime** role



While accepting each of us occasionally goes the extra mile 'for the good of the job', this should never be the norm, nor should people feel pressurised to do so.

The key findings of the TUC study from unpublished Office for National Statistics data on gender and the public sector, sadly tend to support what we are hearing from our members:

- more than one in six (18 per cent) of men work unpaid overtime, averaging eight hours per week, and a similar percentage of women (18.4 per cent) also put in unpaid hours
- even though many women work part-time the average for those

undertaking unpaid overtime is seven hours a week

- one in four public sector employees (25 per cent) worked unpaid overtime, compared to around one in six employees in the private sector (16 per cent)
- public sector workers contributed £12bn of unpaid overtime last year
- public sector employees make up just a quarter of total employees (25 per cent) but produce more than a third (35 per cent) of all unpaid overtime.

If the NCA wants you to stay beyond any contractual requirement to do so, please

understand that you are entitled to be compensated and your trade union will support you.

Over the next three months we will provide public facing support for you all as employees within the NCA in relation to any requirement for you to work additional hours. Please read the policy, sit down with your manager or ask one of our army of NCOA reps to do it for you (perhaps while you're having your 30-minute lunch break, away from your desk!) to get this thing sorted once and for all.

There's no such thing as a non-overtime role. It's simple – if they want you to stay, they have to pay.



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NCA bid to battle **organised crime**

The NCA reports that an additional £2.7bn of funding is needed to tackle the 181,000 offenders linked to serious and organised crime in the UK – and the Government can't afford not to pay.

Organised crime is estimated to cost the UK economy £37bn each year, equivalent to nearly £2,000 per family. The 181,000 offenders (more than twice the strength of the regular British army) is a conservative estimate, as it only considers known members of organised crime groups plus offenders operating on the worst child abuse dark web sites.

NCA Director General Lynne Owens (right) says the Agency requires an additional £650m of annual funding over the next three years – more than double the current £424m over the same period – to spearhead the fight against serious and organised crime, which kills more people annually than war, terrorism and natural disasters collectively.

The NCOA believes that protection of the public must be a priority for the Government, and that investment in those who protect the public is paramount. The recent National Strategic Assessment shows:

- nearly 2.9 million accounts registered on the worst child sexual abuse sites on the dark web worldwide – more than five per cent of which are believed to be offenders based in the UK
- the number of NCA referrals about online child sexual abuse and exploitation has increased by 700 per cent since 2013
- referrals of potential victims of modern day slavery have increased by more than 80 per cent since 2016
- the number of county lines



drug supply lines has increased from around 720 to about 2000 in just over a year

- financial losses from fraud soared by 32 per cent between April – September 2018 and 3.6 million incidents of fraud were reported in England and Wales the same year.

Just prior to his appointment as Secretary of State for Defence,

the Security and Economic Crime Minister, Ben Wallace acknowledged the scale of the threat to the UK saying: "As criminals' use of technology evolves, so must our response. We [the Government] continue to invest in the right capabilities and tools in law enforcement across government and in partnership with the private sector." Sadly Mr Wallace failed to promise any more spending to achieve his response.

It is pleasing to see that the NCA is represented on the recently formed National Policing Board; however it's currently unclear whether the NCA can tap into the Government's commitment to increase the number of police officers by 20,000 over the next three years, and whether such resources will be in addition to the NCA's bid for increased resources to deal with serious and organised crime.

NCOA President Simon Bashford said: "Increased funding of the National Crime Agency should not be a scene from 'Oliver' with an outstretched arm for more. The Government should view the additional funding required, as a necessity and not something that is up for 'plea bargaining'.

"Protecting the public should be Home Secretary Priti Patel's highest priority following her recent appointment. Given that it is widely recognised that organised crime transcends all UK borders and at a cost to the UK budget of £37bn, then the Government simply can't afford not to."

NCOA secures rehabilitation

The NCOA has always played its part in helping to improve the welfare and rehabilitation provisions for our members, including the now Agency-wide access to the North West Police Benevolent Fund (NWPBF).

The NWPBF delivers excellent standards of care and has benefitted from a recent £1.5m redevelopment, but its geographic location makes it an awkward proposition for those who are based at sites in the south of England. Belfast sits even more remotely across the Irish Sea – more on Belfast shortly.

Despite previous attempts to introduce new occupational health (OH) partners to the Agency we recognise that ever-decreasing resources are being pulled in all directions, including pay. Perhaps it was unreasonable to expect major investment from the Agency when there were more pressing concerns on how to balance the books.

Undeterred, General Secretary Simon Boon reached out to Flint House, the Police Rehabilitation Centre (PRC) at Goring-on-Thames, to see what appetite existed to include NCOA members (initially) within their strictly defined eligibility criteria. As a registered charity founded in 1890 to treat injured police officers, this would be no mean feat, even when recognising the significant changes in policing since it first opened its doors in Hove during Queen Victoria's reign.

The PRC complex is truly impressive, from its original flint manor house set in 14 acres of Oxfordshire countryside, to state-of-the-art physiotherapy suites, fully equipped gyms, fitness suites, spa, hydrotherapy and swimming pools. In addition to the well-equipped, on-site accommodation, the relatively recent addition of the 'wellbeing centre' completes the service.



Flint House currently handles 3,500 clients annually, including 500 seeking treatment and support for mental health-related concerns. To respond to this, its highly qualified staff includes 15 full-time physios and four rehabilitation physios. It also boasts a team of 14 nurses and health and wellbeing staff (RGNs) and five dedicated mental health practitioners. The facilities include quiet rooms, lounges, restaurant (free) and bar (not free!), as well as an outdoor fitness trail, putting green and an all-weather bowling green.

Highly constructive

Following five months of negotiation, Simon was called to address the Board of Trustees to lay out our case for accepting all NCA officers at the PRC. While it was evident they had considerable reservations about moving their eligibility criteria away from front-

line policing, the meeting was highly constructive for both sides.

At the end of July we were delighted to receive the news that the Trustees had made a significant, and historical decision, to permit National Crime Agency officers full access to their facilities.

The NCA now has a geographic spread of rehabilitation health and wellbeing services to which all UK-based officers have reasonable access... well almost!

Since 2015, the NCOA has made concerted efforts to include bespoke services for officers based in Northern Ireland, recognising the unique risk they take as law enforcement professionals. This risk is heightened (in our opinion) due to a recent increase in side-by-side work with the PSNI and engagement on the Paramilitary Crime Task Force. We believe the solution lies with the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining

for all in the NCA



Trust (PRRT) based in Hollywood, County Down.

Following contact by the NCOA, it is clear that there was a willingness to explore the removal of constitutional barriers, including by the then Justice Minister for Northern Ireland, a number of Trustees and PRRT staff themselves. Each was sympathetic to the case for including NCA officers, but the matter could not be pursued without buy-in from the NCA.

We have consistently raised the PRRT issue with the NCA, given our belief that it represents a realistic, secure and viable option for Northern Ireland staff and one which is well within the Agency's reach.

Flint House is currently preparing application forms and adjusting its website and communications to include NCA staff. We envisage that the necessary administration will be concluded in October, when we will report back to let you know how you

can access their impressive facilities.

Chief Executive Officer of the PRC, Tom McAuslin, said: "On behalf of the Trustees and staff I am very pleased to welcome the National Crime Agency, which can now use Flint House as its Rehabilitation Centre of choice."

Significant step

The NCOA has shared this exciting news with the DG Lynne Owens, who thanked the NCOA "for the time and effort you have placed in securing the services of Flint House for NCA officers, which you have negotiated for all NCA officers regardless of role or delegation of powers. This is a significant step in supporting our workforce and will add to the wide compliment of services we have made available to them."

Lynne added that she had directed the NCA Wellbeing lead to consider the wider services highlighted by the NCOA: "This includes revisiting the PRRT services that could be made available to our officers in Northern Ireland, and to clearly communicate the PRC services now available to all."

"I support and recognise that the health and wellbeing of our workforce is central to our successful delivery of our mission. As a result we have put renewed effort into refreshing and reviewing our wider occupational health offer, and you will be aware of the effort placed into this over the summer."

We thank the DG for her proactive role in the wellbeing arena. In securing the PRC provisions, the NCA will soon have a network of rehabilitation facilities capable of supporting its workforce the length and breadth of the country, to get them back to work quickly and safely – at zero organisational cost.

There will be a 'modest' individual cost of £1.70 a week to join Flint



Pictures © Flint House / Andrew Fleming Photography

House (less than the cost of a Spring Gardens canteen latte!), which will get you through the doors for a period of convalescence and rehabilitation when most needed.

Significantly, the PRC will accept you with pre-existing conditions; you don't need to be 'off sick', suffering from a serious or life-threatening condition, and whether you were on or off-duty at the time is irrelevant.

NCOA members can even obtain a doctor's referral note with ease through the new GP 24 service which we introduced as a standard benefit to you in April this year.

As Flint House prepares to welcome NCA officers, we welcome the Flint House team who will get you fighting fit and back to work or back to the hobbies you're currently prevented from enjoying as quickly as possible.

Given that injuries and mental health issues are not something any of us ever plan to be affected by, the question is not whether you can afford to pay £1.70 per week, it's whether you can afford not to?



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¹Source: Unbiased.co.uk 2016

Leicester City did it – can the NCA?

Is it possible to go from nearly bottom of the People Survey league to the top, in 12 months? The NCOA thinks it is!

In the Spring edition of **Under Cover** we laid bare the results of the 2018 People Survey which sadly sees the NCA at the bottom of the leader board. Are the NCA happy with this? No. Are the NCOA happy with this? Well, given that more than half the NCA workforce are our members – or course we're not.

So, what next? Do we simply wait for the 2019 survey and hope everything will be better? Probably not the best plan.

missed, one which could possibly identify problems and probably more importantly, potentially lift the Agency from the doldrums with regards to future people surveys.

In order to gather more detailed information we therefore scheduled a programme of workplace meetings at affected sites and drilled down as much as we could to see if there were wider problems influencing the results, which were not being picked up by the survey.

completion Nina Cope, the Director General – Capabilities, became aware of this additional 'Phase II' analysis. We subsequently provided a copy of the report to Nina, who provided the following response on behalf of the Agency:

"The feedback from the NCOA has offered further insight which supports the views we have gathered from our leadership team visits. We are working to directly address concerns from our people through our 'Proud to Protect' events, our 'Top 10 Fix-its' and local engagement plans within teams across our sites. As the NCOA notes, some of the areas will take some time to resolve, but we want all our people to know what we are working on and why, so they know we have heard and listened to their feedback. I hope our people continue to engage through our visits, web chats and events so we can work on making improvements together. Thanks to the NCOA, for the work they have done and in helping to make the NCA be the best place it can be for all our people."

We have always made it clear that our analysis was never undertaken to embarrass the NCA, rather that it was necessary to improve the experience of the most dissatisfied groups (where possible) and in turn lift the NCA to the top of the Civil Service People Survey table.

So, is there time to turn things around? It's going to be tight that's for sure, the 2019 People Survey will be open for business from October 4 to November 4 – do please take part.

Come on team NCA – we're behind you all the way!

“We have always made it clear that our analysis was never undertaken to embarrass the NCA, rather that it was necessary to improve the experience of the most dissatisfied groups (where possible) and in turn lift the NCA to the top of the Civil Service People Survey table.”

As you know, we carried out some analysis of the survey data to identify the 10 'least satisfied' groups from the 132 groups who collectively make up the Agency response. While this information, along with some wider observations and recommendations, were subsequently shared with the Agency, it was not immediately clear what they intended to do with it.

Of course, we had hoped that it would target these 'bottom 10' groups to establish what problems were being experienced at these specific locations, resulting in such a dismal response.

Sometime later and with an awareness of the release of the Agency's 'Top 10 fixes', we felt that an opportunity had been

Meetings were open to all staff (members or not) and at all grades to ensure we gathered as much information as we could. In due course, an overarching report was created to share with the Agency, seeking a formal response. The contents of this detailed document had been anonymised but structured around each of the separate teams under the spotlight.

The direct manner in which it was delivered has, we hope, captured a number of underlying issues often unique to these work groups. We believe some can be fixed with swift intervention by the Agency; others require some more work, along with some clear, directly targeted communication from the NCA.

As the document was nearing

How Imposter Syndrome



Senior lecturer at Swansea University, Stephanie John explains why professionalism may come with a health warning

'Imposter Syndrome' is described as intense feelings of fraudulence and self-doubt in the face of success (Clance & Imes 1978). It is said to affect at least 70 per cent of the population at some point in their lives (Gravois 2007).

Although Imposter Syndrome is prevalent in a range of contexts, it tends to flourish in the professional workplace, leading to feelings of inadequacy and competence doubts. It has destructive effects on psychological wellbeing and is guilty of stunting professional development and contributing to burn out (Young 2011).

Implications of Imposter Syndrome

NCOA members in the National Crime Agency undertake work which is incredibly challenging, presenting high expectations and levels of risk. With elevated professional standards and the responsibility of ensuring the safety of the public, it is not uncommon to experience feelings of discomfort, unworthiness and self-doubt (Boyd 2009). This is termed the Imposter Syndrome.

Such feelings are not only distressing, they are destructive, having negative effects on job satisfaction and performance. Living with such overwhelming self-doubt can lead to self-handicapping behaviours such as avoiding professional development or promotion opportunities to prevent feeling out of one's depth (Neureiter & Traut-Mattausch 2016).

Contributing factors: Environment and professional context

Contextual anxieties often arise due to workplace demands such as high levels of responsibility, expectations and competitiveness (Young 2011). Working within the NCA encompasses all of these, so it's unsurprising that imposter anxieties ensue. Complexities of the organisation may lead to not feeling good enough to justify your role and its potential impact, particularly when the wellbeing of the public is at stake. It's not uncommon for professionals to feel out of their depth (Mount & Tardanico 2014). It is however important to remember that feeling incompetent and being incompetent are two very different things. Identifying and managing self-efficacy concerns may therefore prove beneficial (Whitman & Shanine 2012). Supporting colleagues with open discussion regarding their professional confidence is considered fundamental for management of the Imposter Syndrome (Cokey et al 2015)

Other professionals

With success comes exposure to other successful professionals with diverse skills and experience, which leads us to question whether we are skilled, experienced and qualified enough (Gopel 2018). Strong professional characters and comparing oneself to our colleagues can result in a reluctance to expose



inadequacies, thus feeding the Imposter Syndrome (Hutchins 2015). Feelings of isolation can arise when we are reluctant to speak up for fear that our competence maybe questioned if we do. We avoid revealing our perceived unworthiness.

However, these anxieties can be challenged. It is important to realise that the prevalence of Imposter Syndrome is likely to mean that others feel the same way (Gravois 2007). Recognition of Imposter Syndrome – and attempting to achieve a realistic self-perception – is key to managing it.

Consider this: The NCA is made up professionals who are highly skilled and intellectual (you included). Is it likely that you would have fooled

may be affecting NCA staff



therefore provide some explanation for the under-representation of women at the top end of the grade structure for the NCA.

“Feelings of isolation can arise when we are reluctant to speak up for fear that our competence maybe questioned”

Conclusion

Imposter Syndrome is pervasive among successful professionals, having negative effects on their wellbeing, performance and organisational outcomes (Gravois 2007 & Young 2011). Adaptable, individualised support, effective leadership, mentorship and open communication can however be implemented as means to manage Imposter Syndrome and its consequences (Sakulku & Alexander 2011).

Managers and supportive colleagues are best positioned to discuss performance issues which relate to self-esteem, through encouraging individuals to explore their credibility and personal skills that have led to their current role. Professional development reviews provide the opportunity to formalise the management of confidence issues and promote a realistic self-view (Lane 2015).

At all levels, it's important not to let Imposter Syndrome win – remember: “Life begins at the end of your comfort zone” – Neale Donald Walsch

them all into believing you are competent, or is it more likely that you are competent and you are yet to realise it?

The most successful people are those who question their knowledge rather than themselves, and are able to ask for help when they need it (Cannon-Brooks 2018).

Gender

Imposter Syndrome exists in men but appears to flourish in women. It is also well documented that women are under-represented in high-level professional roles, with women representing circa 40 per cent of the workforce for the NCA. Although reasons for this may include time out of work to care for children and increased requirements to balance

life and family commitments, the prevalence of the Imposter Syndrome among women cannot be ignored (McGuinness & Piper 2018). Impostor feelings are believed to be rooted in personal concepts such as self-doubt and low self-efficacy, which are known to affect women more profoundly, particularly in the workplace (Lane 2014). Women are significantly less likely to strive for success and are reluctant to attempt promotion by comparison to their male counterparts (Bigilhole & White 2013). The Imposter Syndrome may

Stephanie John (MA, FHEA, BSC, RGN, RNT) is a senior nurse lecturer and admissions tutor within the School of Human and Health Science. While Stephanie's speciality is Plastics Trauma, her overriding passion relates to Nurse Education and supporting both undergraduate and postgraduate nurses in the clinical and academic components of their role.

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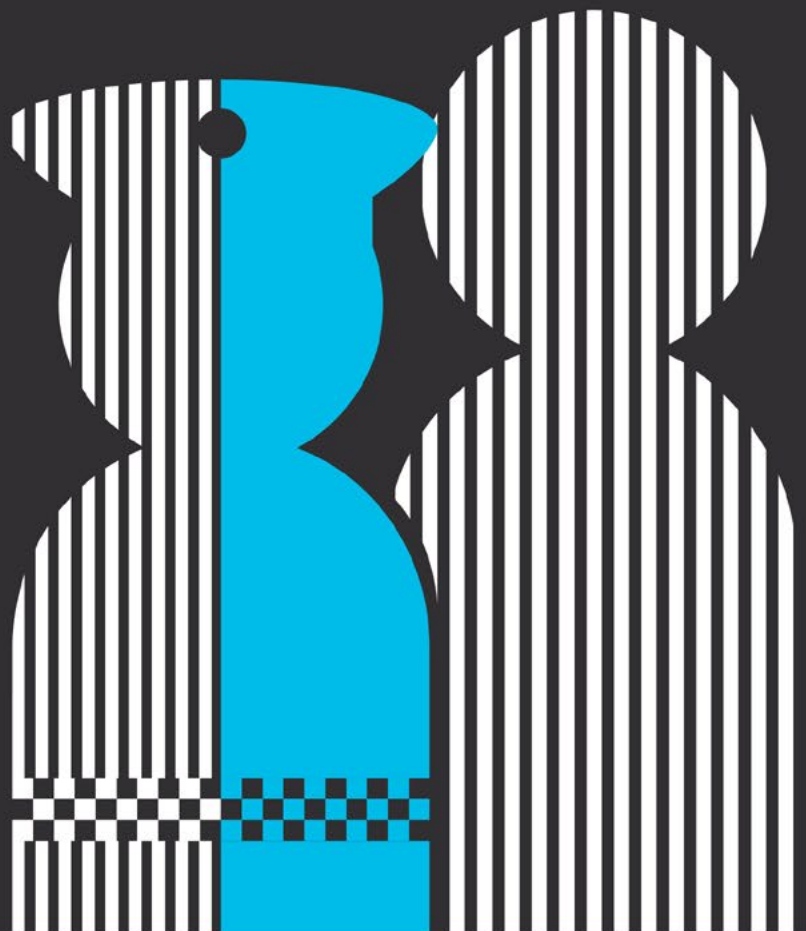
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Ride safe Tom, from us all

'Tom Collins – a cocktail of the nicest bloke you've ever met, mixed with plenty of heart and humour.' That's how friends and colleagues remember the NCA officer who sadly lost his battle with a brain tumour earlier this year, having been diagnosed in 2014.

Tom was a truly professional and diligent member of the NCA, and his achievements can be recognised in abundance. He didn't allow his illness to affect his family life and work ethic, so much so that, even when on long-term sick leave undergoing chemotherapy, he would be on his computer dealing with case files and disclosure.

Thanks to his evidence gathering during this time, his review of a historical case led to an individual being convicted and sentenced to more than 20 years in prison for CSEA offences. The result wouldn't have been possible without Tom, and was typical of his calibre and desire to put criminals behind bars.

Tom had countless friends from Taunton and Bridgwater where he was active in the carnival scene, supporting his wife Gemma. He liked to frequent the local gin bars (purely for research) and was passionate about Formula One, even getting to meet Lewis Hamilton, and on one occasion being given the F1 VIP treatment and drinking champagne – not by the glass but by the bottle! He was also an associate member of the international law enforcement motorcycle club, Lex Legio MC.

Powerful and inspiring

On receiving the news in 2014 about his illness, Tom set up a blog at fightingalbie.co.uk, not only to help him come to terms with his condition but to help others to share their illness and stories. It's a very powerful and inspiring blog, and anyone who knew Tom cannot help but feel emotional as it sounds like him speaking.

Tom died on April 20, 2019 and his funeral was a fitting end. On entering the crematorium, the huge number



of mourners were welcomed by Hawaiian music (Tom and Gemma loved Hawaii) to view Tom's casket, which was "wrapped" with a picture of his beloved VW van. Tom was also there in the form of a life-sized cut-out of himself, to keep an eye on the proceedings. At Gemma's request the NCA attendees all turned out in outrageous Hawaiian shirts to go along with the theme.

Throughout Tom's brave battle he was supported by the NCOA, and colleagues and friends outside of work. He is sadly missed by his Exeter colleagues and the wider community and will always be remembered for his wit, charm, enthusiasm and dedication to law enforcement.

His wife Gemma gave birth to a beautiful girl (Koa) a few weeks after the funeral, so sadly Tom did not get to see or hold her, but we all know his heart and soul are with Gemma, Koa and his family.

Ride safe Tom from us all.

Under Cover thanks colleagues at Exeter & Bristol who provided this moving tribute.

NCOA team complete the Mighty Hike for Paul and Macmillan



On Saturday, June 8, NCOA Members Laura Clement, Tom Booker, Iain Shotton and Jim Suttle, joined by two other NCA colleagues, pulled on their boots and slapped

on the suncream to hike over 26 miles along the south coast to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The Mighty Hike saw our intrepid members join hundreds of others to walk the marathon distance from Brighton Racecourse to Eastbourne.

Ahead of the hike, Team Leader Laura Clement said: "Our colleague at Tolworth, Paul Chandler, passed away suddenly in February, and Macmillan was a cause close to his heart, which has added an extra incentive to the activity and its fundraising. He and his family will be in our thoughts, and will no doubt spur us on to keep limping through the last few miles!"

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Team Solent & Slough take on the Three Peaks

The National Three Peaks Challenge is a gruelling mountaineering event, which involves climbing the highest peaks in Britain – Ben Nevis (1,344m), Scafell Pike (978m) and Snowdon (1,085m) – in under 24 hours.

Officers from Solent and Slough including Neal Williams, Jules Harriman, Chris Grimson, Nick Roach, Chris Adams, Sam Pearce and Neil McCutcheon, recently completed the challenge to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Neal explained: "Our challenge began with an evening ascent of 'The Ben'. The route offered spectacular views over the surrounding highlands and we all managed to make it to the summit and back within our allocated time limit, ready to depart for the Lake District by 11pm.

"We began our next ascent of Scafell Pike at 6am and followed the relentlessly steep and rugged path to the summit. The warmth of the sun was welcome in the wake of the cold and snow on Ben Nevis, and the summit of Scafell Pike did not disappoint."

After a few obligatory 'summit selfies' they descended back to the minibus below and headed for the final challenge in North Wales.



"With weary legs and high spirits we soldiered on," said Neal, "and our arrival at 1,085m was celebrated with hugs and cheers." But with only a few hours until the 24-hour deadline, the team postponed the liquid celebration until they crossed the finishing line at the base of Snowdon, arriving with minutes to spare.

If you would like to show support, go to www.justgiving.com/Neil-Graeme-Aidan

Steve's Worthing team make a big splash in the Ukraine

If you ever wonder what a National Officer does when not working for the NCOA, in the case of Steve Bond it's coaching water polo – and before you ask he's never drowned a pony!

Steve coaches Worthing, his local club, as well as various junior teams who represent the south east of England, and is also a coach of England's Under-17 boys' team.

His most recent trip involved helping to take a young Worthing senior team to Lviv in the Ukraine, for a 10-team 'mini' polo competition. The invitation came from a good friend of Steve's – Markiyan Poloviy, who has trained and played with the Worthing senior squad over a number of years.

Steve said: "Playing in an outdoor pool in front of good crowds with cameras broadcasting the competition on Ukrainian TV, it took Worthing time to come to terms with both the physicality of the opposition and a number of the rules that were



Steve's young Worthing team (left) and (below) with a tournament referee

unique for this competition. This wasn't helped by the pre-event technical meeting that was entirely in Ukrainian!"

Teams had travelled from parts of Ukraine as well as Lithuania, Latvia and Belarus, and although Worthing – the youngest team in the competition – didn't win a game, they were very competitive and made significant improvement as the tournament progressed.



"It was a brilliant experience," added Steve. "Some of our players were slightly surprised by how physical the competition was, but the hospitality of Lviv was exceptional and my Ukrainian improved as the weekend progressed."

Steve's next overseas coaching duty will be taking the England under-17s to Hungary.



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