Service is ‘regressing’ on women

THE British Association for Women in Policing’s Gender Agenda 3 will reveal “there is a perception that the police service is regressing” when it comes to female officers.

The third version of the Gender Agenda will be published in mid-October in London, and has been informed by research led by Manchester Metropolitan University (Policing Reform: Consequences for the gender agenda and the female workforce, published in January 2014).

The Gender Agenda 3 – launched on 21 October – will provide guidance under three headings: national, force level and individual responsibility. According to Ch Insp Fay Tennet, BAWP Vice-President, “Gender Agenda 3 sets out what BAWP action will be taken to progress the recommendations and will also form our strategy for BAWP.”

She said: “The research highlights that there has been gradual progression of women in policing, also some areas of good practice. However there is continuing concern that ensuring we have a representative workforce is no longer important and there is a perception that the police service is regressing rather than moving forwards.

“BAWP is proud of how far women have progressed within the police service. However we recognise that further work and support needs to continue, and we look forward to working with stakeholders so together we can deliver the best service to the public.”

The Gender Agenda was originally launched by the BAWP in 2001. The Agenda sought to “start a dialogue and increase understanding of the reality of being a woman officer in [the] police service”. This was followed up by the updated second version in 2006.

BAWP Coordinator Parwinder Dale added: “The BAWP committee are currently working on the action plan to implement and carry out the recommendations derived from Gender Agenda 3.”

Countdown to IAWP in Cardiff

THE International Association of Women Police centenary conference in Cardiff next year will be a “unique policing event.”

The event also marks 100 years of police women with full powers of arrest in the UK.

A research assistant has been appointed to collate information on the history of women in British policing, and an exhibition will be staged at the conference.

The conference will be held from Sunday 23 to Thursday 27 August 2015.

BAWP Secretary Carolyn Williamson said: “We have several registrations from British forces already. We are off to Winnipeg at the end of September [for this year’s IAWP conference], and anticipate registering the 100th delegate there, so things are really taking off.

“The comprehensive training programme is being formed, looking at issues including operational policing, personal development and strategic planning, so there should be something for everyone – officers and staff.”

You can register and pay for the conference now, at www.iawp2015.org. The fee covers all training, gala meals and social events, but not accommodation. Visit the website, www.iawp2015.org, or contact Carolyn on carolyn@iawp2015.org.
**BAWP looks at home and abroad to celebrate women in policing**

As we come to the end of what will undoubtedly have been a busy summer for us all, I do hope you have managed to find some time for rest and reflection.

The coming months promise to be both exciting and memorable, with events taking place nationally and internationally.

Home Office figures released in July showed a small increase in the percentage of female officers and a rise in the proportion of women represented in senior ranks, which is positive news but will of course need building on. (See report on page three.)

In October, we have an event to mark the launch of the Gender Agenda, which will be an opportunity to enjoy some excellent speakers and place a real focus on women in policing.

November brings our annual awards ceremony and a chance to celebrate some great work and outstanding achievements.

I am aware that the winners have already been announced, so congratulations to you all and I look forward to offering my best wishes in person later in the year.

At the end of September, the International Association of Women Police holds its 52nd annual conference in Winnipeg, Canada, which unfortunately on this occasion I will be unable to attend.

I would, however, like to take this opportunity to recognise those who have been nominated for awards and it is particularly pleasing to see three winners from our own national awards receiving international recognition for their efforts and contributions.

As autumn arrives, attention will of course move to next year, when we will celebrate 100 years of women in policing.

There will be much more to follow on that in the coming issues of *Grapevine*. It promises to be an extraordinary calendar of events to commemorate such an important landmark.

*Cressida Dick, BAWP President*
THE number of female police officers in England and Wales has slightly risen over the past 12 months, official figures show.

There were 35,653 female police officers in the 43 forces on 31 March 2014. This is an increase of 252 officers compared to the same point in 2013.

This represents 27.9 per cent of the police officer total workforce and an increase of 0.6 percentage points compared with a year earlier.

There were 39 female chief officers, 68 chief superintendents, 126 superintendents, 371 chief inspectors, 1,143 inspectors, 4,032 sergeants and 29,873 police constables.

The proportion of women in senior ranks (chief inspector and above) was 19.5 per cent (up by 1.6 percentage points since March 2013), compared with 30.1 per cent of women at constable rank (up by 0.4 percentage points since March 2013).

In the 12 months to 31 March 2014, 5,589 police officers joined the 43 police forces – of the joining officers, 32.4 per cent were female.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2014, 6,904 police officers left the 43 police forces. Transfers between these forces accounted for 11.7 per cent of leavers. Of the leaving officers, 19.7 per cent were female.

Women make up a much greater proportion of police staff. The Office of National Statistics shows there were 64,097 police staff in the 43 police forces on 31 March 2014 – women accounted for 60.3 per cent of all police staff.

This figure is 32.5 percentage points more than for officers. Compared with a year earlier, the proportion of female police staff fell by 0.1 percentage points.

There were 13,066 police community support officers (PCSOs) in the 43 police forces on 31 March 2014, a decrease of 1,139, or 8.0 per cent, compared with a year earlier.

Women accounted for 44.6 per cent of all PCSOs. 16.7 percentage points more than for officers. Compared with a year earlier, the proportion of PCSOs who were female fell by 0.1 percentage point.

There were 17,789 Special constables in England and Wales. Women accounted for 30.8 per cent of all Special constables, 2.9 percentage points more than for officers, and the same proportion compared with a year earlier.

The overall officer numbers across England and Wales have dropped by 1,674 in the past year.

There were 127,909 police officers in the 43 police forces of England and Wales as at 31 March 2014 – down from 129,584 in 2013. It is the fifth consecutive annual fall in officer numbers across England and Wales and represents the lowest number of police officers for 12 years.

The overall numbers of police staff (down 1,412) and PCSOs (down 1,139) also fell year on year. And the figures show that in March 2010, there were 244,497 people working in policing. There are now 209,362 – down 35,135.

Four women succeed in direct entry test

A NUMBER of women have made it through the stringent selection processes for direct entry to superintendent and fast track to inspector, the College of Policing has revealed.

Four women were selected out of 13 people for the direct entry programme, which enables “talented” people from outside the service to be parachuted into the superintending ranks.

The successful candidates will now be recommended to either the Met, Avon and Somerset, Sussex or North Yorkshire Police. Just one in three applicants met the required standard, the College said.

The forces will now make their final decisions on appointment and candidates who are offered and accept a position will start their role in November.

Director of Police National Assessment Centres, Chief Constable Sara Thornton, said: “We’re looking for outstanding leaders to come into the service through this programme and we have seen some excellent candidates perform well in these tough and testing four-day assessment centres.

“The process was deliberately demanding so that we could find the candidates with both leadership qualities and the ability to bring new ideas around efficiency, effectiveness and make a positive impact on the culture in policing.”

A further 19 women have been selected for the fast track constable to inspector programme, in which new officers will be made acting inspectors after just three years. Women made up 44 per cent of the intake of 43.

Chief Constable Thornton added: “The aptitude of these candidates is impressive and I am confident that the applicants that forces take forward will make a tangible impact on the development of policing and ultimately, the service delivered to the public.”

A total of 105 people went through the process, which had a 66 per cent failure rate.

Women exceed in inspector tests

WOMEN outshone men this year as they went through the national sergeant to inspector promotion process.

A total of 91 female candidates took their OSPRE Part II assessment centre, of which 79 passed – a success rate of 87 per cent.

Of the 292 male candidates that took the test, 214 passed – a success rate of just 73 per cent.

The pass rates were similar to last year’s, according to the College of Policing, which runs the tests.

The OSPRE Part II assessment is used by police forces in England and Wales to qualify officers to the rank of inspector. Those that pass can then apply for inspector roles through their local force procedures. Nearly 300 of the 384 candidates passed the test – an overall pass rate of 76 per cent.
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Officers thrilled to receive birthday honours

FEMALE officers across the differing ranks were honoured by Her Majesty the Queen for their services to policing in the Birthday Honours.

PC Amanda Dickens, of South Yorkshire Police (pictured left), has been made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in recognition of her work in neighbourhood policing and her work against child sexual exploitation.

She has also worked alongside police staff to set up diversionary activities for young people on her Rotherham patch, to keep them out of trouble.

PC Dickens said: "I’m just in shock about the MBE, but very proud and honoured to have it. It’s a once in a lifetime thing."

Alicia Palmer was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Police Welfare.

Judith Gillespie, former deputy chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, was awarded the Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). She had served with the force for more than 30 years when she retired in March.

And Beryl Clark, a long term volunteer at Lancashire Constabulary, was made an MBE for services to policing and the community in Preston.

Sharon Rowe, of West Midlands Police (pictured right), was awarded the Queen’s Police Medal in recognition of her work with the force.

The former temporary deputy chief constable, now retired, said: "I am honoured to have received QPM. Policing is a fantastic career."

Other worthy winners of the QPM were Hertfordshire Constabulary’s assistant chief constable Alison Rooome-Gifford; PC Gaynor Grout, of Surrey Police; and PC Karen MacDonald, from Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

PC Sonya Hill, of West Midlands Police was awarded an MBE. PC Hill has been the driving force behind a project for 16 to 25-year-olds run by West Midlands Police and the Prince’s Trust since 2006 that has contributed to a drop in re-offending rates.

She said: "I was flabbergasted when I opened the letter and simply cannot find a word to describe how I feel. Never in a million years did I think I would be recognised in this way."

BAWP gears up for 8th awards ceremony

EXCELLENCE in policing will be honoured at the upcoming eighth British Association for Women in Policing Awards in November.

Cressida Dick, President of the BAWP and an Assistant Commissioner at the Met, will welcome delegates to the event and there will be an awards presentation and guest speakers at the day at the Bridge Foot Holiday Inn in Stratford-Upon-Avon.

Sara Thornton, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police and Anne-Marie Orler, former United Nations Police Adviser, will also be speaking at the event on 11 November.

Ch Insp Sarah Shrubsall, BAWP Committee Member from Suffolk Constabulary, said: “We are excited to be hosting our eighth annual awards ceremony.

“This year, as well as the awards ceremony itself and a fabulous three course lunch, inspirational speakers have been invited to attend to offer a development opportunity to those who wish to join us in celebrating the achievements of our award winners.

“There will be distinguished guests from forces across the country joining us on the day, and attendees will be encouraged to meet others and exploit those networking opportunities throughout the event. Book now as places are limited and going fast. We look forward to seeing you there.”

The father of Greater Manchester Police PC Nicola Hughes, who was shot and killed in Manchester in 2012, is also attending the event.

For tickets, please register online at www.bawp.org. Tickets are £85 for BAWP members and £95 to non-members.

Women improve fitness test score

WOMEN police officers across England and Wales have recorded a 94 per cent pass rate in the new annual fitness tests – a slight rise on earlier this year.

The results of more than 13,000 police fitness tests taken between March and May in 32 forces were published on 15 August, with officers of both sexes achieving an overall pass rate of 98 per cent. Of the 3,693 women who took the test, 3,479 (94.2 per cent) passed. Of the 10,265 men who took the test, 10,127 passed (98.7 per cent.)

Results covering September 2013 to March 2014, published by the College of Policing in May, showed that 7,419 women had taken the test with 6,849 passing (92.4 per cent). A total of 20,820 men took the test between those months with 20,583 (98.9 per cent) passing.

Fitness tests become mandatory for all police officers on 1 September. The 15m shuttle run is based on scientific research to match the aerobic demands of officer safety training. The standard is the same as used when recruiting officers.

Never forgotten

SURVIVING family members and serving officers gathered at the National Memorial Arboretum on 20 July to remember officers who have fallen in the line of duty. The annual Care of Police Survivors Service of Remembrance was attended by more than 500 people, including BAWP president Cressida Dick (pictured).
PC’s world win

A POLICE constable from the Met has stormed to World Cup victory as part of the England Rugby Union Women’s Team. PC Claire Allan, of the Acton Proactive Robbery Squad, helped her team win the cup in August in a 21-9 victory over Canada. The 29-year-old PC Allan said she was “buzzing” after the win in Paris.

DIGITAL

Assaults rise

THERE were 20,249 assaults on police officers across the UK between April 2013 and March – an increase of 579 assaults compared to the previous year. A police officer in the UK is assaulted every 27 minutes, equating to 56 officers attacked on the streets every day.

No cut in forces

THE Home Secretary has rejected calls to reduce the number of police forces in England and Wales in order to save money to reinvest in frontline policing. Theresa May told the Superintendents’ Association’s annual conference in Warwickshire that “the evidence is clear – big, top-down restructure is simply not the answer” to save money in policing.

Exam plan off

PLANS to introduce exam-based pay rises for officers have been dropped after discussions in the final meeting of the Police Negotiating Board. The proposal was outlined in the Winsor review of police pay and conditions.

Award for globe-trotting licensing officer tackling underage drinking

A LICENSING officer from Police Scotland has been presented with the prestigious Winston Churchill Fellowship and travelled to the US and Canada to research underage drinking.

The Winston Churchill Trust funds British citizens to travel overseas and bring back best practice for the benefit of their professions and communities.

PC Susan McDonald, based at Livingston Police Station, West Lothian, applied for the fellowship in 2012 with the aim of finding ways to change young people’s attitudes to alcohol, with a particular focus on influencing parents and guardians.

Her chosen research subject was partly inspired by an unprovoked attack on her 16-year-old daughter by another teenager, who was drunk at the time and unaccompanied by a responsible adult at her subsequent appearances in court.

“My fellowship was designed to allow me to visit countries where the way of life was similar to that in Scotland and where significant work was ongoing in relation to preventing and reducing underage drinking by influencing a change in attitude by the adults in their life,” said PC McDonald.

She travelled to the US and Canada in November 2013, where she met a number of academics specialising in addiction and substance abuse, as well as legal experts and police, including officers from Seattle, Vancouver and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

She was introduced to many strategies, initiatives, projects and books, and now hopes to put some of the schemes into action back at home.

PC McDonald was impressed with a Dry Prom scheme in the Canadian province of British Columbia, which encourages communities to organise alcohol-free end-of-year parties for school pupils.

PC McDonald hopes to meet representatives working in education and industry, as well as those from Police Scotland, the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Prison Service in the near future. As part of the fellowship, she has completed a report, entitled Steamin’ Scotland - A Parents’ Prerogative, which can be found on the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust website.

She was awarded the fellowship by Dame Mary Peters, the former British athlete who became a Winston Churchill Fellow in 1972.

“I felt privileged to be given this opportunity and would urge others to similarly apply for an award,” said PC McDonald. “It’s an amazing experience.”

Police Scotland examines flexible working

POLICE Scotland is examining its flexible working policies after the force’s federation warned of an “exodus” of women officers from the ranks.

Jackie Muller, National Equality Secretary of the Scottish Police Federation, said the force’s “rigid” policies for securing flexible and part-time working are endangering the retention of female officers.

Nicky Page, Head of People Management for Police Scotland, confirmed that talks were being held with the Federation to discuss flexible working and that a recent meeting about this was “very constructive”.

She said: “Our officers play a vital part in helping keep people safe in Scotland. We do our very best to manage the needs of our all people with the demands of Scotland-wide policing.

“We work hard with our officers to achieve this but on occasions we will not always be able to accommodate everyone’s requests. We cannot discuss individual cases.”

The talks came after Ms Muller called for changes to working practices at the force. She said: “I’m pretty confident that officers are going to see a real improvement in process for flexible working. It will be a fairer procedure, more locally managed, but realistic and balancing of the needs of the individual with the force.

“Of course the police service wants as many officers on as possible but how many do they need at a particular time? It’s making sure that they address the operational demand. The flip side is that individuals are also going to have to accept that there is going to have to be a balance between what they want and what they really need.

“Obviously we will need to monitor how this new procedure works in practice. I hope that better arrangements in flexible working will lead to better retention of women.”
Male officers ill-informed on gender issues

SIX in 10 female officers in the senior ranks say their male colleagues are “not well informed” on gender issues and half of women officers are not confident to report sexual discrimination, a survey has shown.

According to research carried out by the Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales, 73 per cent of respondents said their workplace was supportive of female officers and 80 per cent said there were visible female role models in policing.

But 43 per cent said they had been treated unfairly due to their gender.

A total of 79 female superintendents and chief superintendents replied to a survey by the association, which will be used to inform future discussions about diversity.

And at 37 per cent, a significant number of female police officers said their gender had been a barrier to progression. Respondents said more needed to be done to provide support and coaching to female officers and that greater provisions for flexible working would help them progress.

Officers were asked why they had not tried to progress further up the ranks. Lack of self-confidence, the balancing of caring responsibilities and work, and a perceived ‘unconscious bias’ within some forces were given as reasons.

Some respondents said they had not tried to progress to chief officer rank because there was a perception that ACPO is “male dominated” or an “old boys club”. Others commented that a “long hours culture” discriminated against women as they were more likely to have caring responsibilities. And many complained that the amount of time required to be away from home on a senior command course proved to be a barrier to career progression.

The latest police force workforce statistics for England and Wales, published in July, show that there are 126 female superintendents out of 763 (16.6 per cent) and 68 female chief superintendents out of 358 (19 per cent).

“This compares to the rank of constable, where women make up 30 per cent of the workforce.”

A survey says male officers need to learn more about gender issues.

The Superintendents’ Association said: “The association recognises the need and value in having a workforce that is more representative of the communities we serve. While there has been progress at junior levels, representation of women at the superintending level remains low.

“We hope [association] members find the results of this survey informative and useful in conversations they may be having with their chief officer teams in relation to equality and diversity issues in their branch.

“The [association’s] Human Resources Business Area will use the results to inform discussions with the College of Policing, Ministers and others in aiming to achieve a better representation of senior women officers in the future.

“It is particularly important at this time of shrinking numbers in the superintending ranks, and the advent of direct entry, that we continue to work with chief officers, the College of Policing, ACPO and the Home Office to ensure blockers to progression are heard and acted upon.”

Liz drives celebrations on force’s birthday

WEST Midlands Police’s first female police driving instructor has been looking back over her role as she helped the force celebrate its 40th birthday this year.

Liz Sumner, who joined the force in 1977, qualified as a driving instructor 11 years later, although she said she had “many hurdles to jump through” to attain her dream job in a male-dominated environment.

Liz, who always loved driving, said: “Once I joined the force, my passion was traffic and of course driving.

“In those days if a police woman had to fight to achieve something, then she had to be better than the man to be considered his equal. I was supported by some senior officers and my determination paid off.”

Liz’s father was also a police officer, who had joined Birmingham City Police in 1949 – and he also served in traffic and as a police driving instructor.

He said: “I trained at Stafford, my Dad had trained at Hendon, but both courses were Home Office approved.

“They are the best person for the job, then gender is irrelevant.”

Liz left the force in 1993 after the birth of her daughter. She said her advice on anyone wanting to pursue a specialist post in policing was to “stay focused and positive”.

Liz wishes “good luck” to any officers reporting post-traumatic stress disorder.

High stress, PTSD and anxiety levels in forces

ONE in 21 police officers in the UK were signed off for stress, depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder in the past financial year, new figures show.

Since the beginning of April, at least 3,564 officers have been signed off from work suffering from psychological illnesses.

According to figures released under the Freedom of Information Act, stress is the most common complaint, followed by depression and anxiety, with a handful of officers reporting post-traumatic stress disorder.

There were more than 6,364 officers signed off with psychological disorders across the UK in 2012/13, which increased to 6,673 the following year.
Internal affairs

Det Supt Jackie Alexander heads Nottinghamshire Police’s Professional Standards Directorate. She reveals the challenges of investigating fellow officers.

How difficult is it to investigate your own colleagues?
There is absolutely no doubt that it is the most challenging role of my career, but it is also the most rewarding. People assume that we must see a lot of bad things, but quite often I am proud to see the amount of resilience and restraint officers show when they go about their everyday business.

When investigating complaints, quite often what we see are genuine mistakes or officers and staff under pressure, but not with intent. Then there are a small proportion of cases where officers are letting the public down and they are letting their colleagues down.

In the most severe cases, it is time to say goodbye. That can have massive repercussions on colleagues, families and on public trust and confidence. But in the long term nothing impacts more on trust and confidence than actually keeping those people in the organisation.

How do you switch off when you finish work?
It can be difficult as I do take work home, but I am good at compartmentalising. I can deal with something over the phone one minute and the next minute I am back with friends. I make a point of cycling with a group of female friends – we do more talking than cycling but that kind of chat and relaxation helps. I have got two teenage sons and a husband, and quite often I am just too busy to think about work.

If you look ahead and think “how am I going to manage to do all that?” it can seem overwhelming. For me it seems to help to just work things out on a week-by-week basis, sometimes even a day-by-day basis.

Have you ever encountered the so-called glass ceiling in policing?
It is one of those things that I don’t see day to day. I was talking to a colleague who joined the accelerated promotion course at the same time as me and became very aware that the men in that cohort have gone on to the ACPO ranks, whereas none of the women have. Obviously, some of that is personal choice, but when you look at it clinically like that there is something about the job that still means women will not progress at the same rate as men, particularly white men.

How does that get fixed in your opinion?
On a personal level, it is very difficult because I have no doubt that if I had set my mind on reaching a more senior rank then that is achievable and I would have found the support I needed. I have got my family and my husband is a police officer. It has become a balance, not just between work and family but also between my career and my husband’s career. I don’t have any regrets. I feel the choices I have made so far are right for me.

So you don’t have aspirations for ACPO?
Never say never. I have still got four and a half years to go, but there are so many things that interest me. One day I want to write a novel, another day I want to have a PhD, another day I think maybe I should consider ACPO. At some point you have to make your decision and strive for it. It is not that I doubt those things are within my grasp, but then again my children are just entering their GCSE and A-level years, and maybe supporting them will be my focus instead.

You are a BAWP committee member. How did you become involved with the association?
Over 20 years ago, I did a piece of research looking at the gender differences, vertical and lateral, for career progression of male and female police officers. As a young officer with a few years’ service, I naively thought that my research would show that things were changing and that the differences were more perceived than real.

I had a shock to see just how different the experiences were, not just for men and women in policing but for men and women in education, social, and political areas too. The thing holding women back then was often their own partner’s attitudes, and also some of their line managers. I was invited by BAWP to present my research. Then, I just found the experience of being with other female colleagues – at that time older and more senior than me – to be a really positive one.

What do you do now with BAWP?
I am very keen to encourage other women through mentoring. The one thing that changed things for me was somebody just leaving in my docket an application form for the accelerated promotion course back in 1991. I don’t even know who put it in there but somebody obviously thought that they saw something in me that meant I should have a go at that.

I think often we just need somebody else to say: “You can be good at what you do. In fact you can be great at what you do.” I take every opportunity I can, particularly with my women colleagues, to tell them how good they are and what they are capable of achieving.

Tell Grapevine readers one thing they wouldn’t know about you.
I took part in a BAWP parade in London during the Queen’s Golden Jubilee. Then we got invited – I don’t know how – onto the roof of the Houses of Parliament to watch the Red Arrows… and I did a cartwheel on the roof of the Houses of Parliament.