

At the Staffordshire NARPO Branch committee meeting held on Saturday 17/6/2017, one of the items discussed was the ongoing matter of Staffordshire Police recommencing reviews of injury on duty (IOD) pensions, together with other associated matters.

Branch committee members had been provided with several documents prior to the meeting to assist them with their deliberations. These comprised a series of letters and e-mails from two of our members to the Branch Chairman and Branch Secretary, and copies of responses sent to the correspondents.

The Branch committee was of the view that the content of the correspondence from the two members constituted complaints against the Executive of Staffordshire NARPO, National NARPO and the Police Federation, both locally and nationally. Its remit allows the Branch Committee consideration only of whether there has been misconduct by members of this Branch.

Some of the correspondence [emails] received from the two members was deemed less than savoury and (as stated) amounted to complaints. After a lengthy debate the Branch committee members came to the conclusion that the Branch Executive had, during the course of two and half years, taken the appropriate action to respond to the many issues raised by the complaining members, and these extensive efforts were recorded in the correspondence files.

The Branch Committee also considered the demand from the correspondents for the recent legal advice Staffordshire NARPO had obtained through the Police Federation to be further reconsidered. The Branch Committee rejected this idea. The background to this is that in November 2016 Staffordshire Police announced a change to its policy on reviews of IOD awards. This was challenged by our representative at the Pensions Board on the basis that there existed an agreement made with Staffordshire Police in 2008, that IOD awards made prior to March 2008 would not generally be reviewed. Staffordshire Police then postponed instigating the policy change to reconsider the matter}. It then announced to NARPO on 18/02/2017 that the IOD award reviews would commence in 2017. The Staffordshire Branch Chairman contacted both the Police Federation and our NEC at Wakefield, who supported (in accordance with established procedure) a request that the Police Federation fund the obtaining of legal advice on the 2008 agreement, which the Police Federation subsequently agreed to. The legal advice obtained by the Police Federation is that the 2008 agreement is fundamentally flawed and not enforceable. The Police Federation has declined a Staffordshire NARPO request for the entire legal advice to be published, but has agreed a summary being circulated. This is published on our website (www.narpo-staffs.co.uk) and has been sent to members that are on our e-mail contacts list. The Branch committee agreed with the NARPO NEC stance that, until such times as a NARPO member has an appropriate case for appeal against an IOD award review, there is no point in seeking further legal advice on the 2008 agreement or other IOD award matters.

The two members have raised concerns about the transfer of administration of Staffordshire Police Pensions to Mouchel, subsequently taken over by Kier: Staffordshire NARPO issued an e-mail on 27 Feb 2015 announcing this would take place in August 2015. Members were also informed of this in the summer edition of the Staffordshire Knot, published in July 2015. Issues raised about data protection and the processes have been investigated by the Office of the Information Commissioner. The investigation found some process errors and issued advice to Staffordshire Police. The principle concern for members was that sensitive

medical information had been exchanged. The Branch Committee is satisfied that is not the case. Whilst Kier has data showing amounts to pay individuals, it has no medical records or information about the medical reason for the payments.

The two members have asked for disclosure of legal advice obtained in 2008 in respect of the agreement. It has now been established that no formal legal advice was obtained by Staffordshire NARPO at that time. The first legal advice on that agreement was that obtained this year through the Police Federation (as described above). It has further been established that the Police Federation did not have written legal advice in 2008. The Branch Committee has learned that a solicitor visiting the Police Federation office informally perused the draft agreement and verbally advised it was acceptable. Staffordshire Police has disclosed to Staffordshire NARPO in 2017 a summary of legal advice it had about the agreement, from 2008.

The Branch noted that from Monday, 19th June 2017 a new Chief Constable, Gareth Morgan, is in post. He has transferred from Avon and Somerset Constabulary. We understand that Avon and Somerset Constabulary has suspended conducting reviews of IOD awards. The Branch is therefore sure that Mr Morgan is well sighted on the issues. In welcoming him to Staffordshire, the Branch Executive will be seeking a meeting as soon as possible to continue the practice of regular meetings with the chief officer and will pursue this matter in the agenda.

Among the requests made by the correspondents was that a group meeting be convened for Staffs NARPO IOD Award members. It was decided that there would be no group meeting. NARPO members with concerns about IOD award reviews are referred to the guidance which is available on the national NARPO Website (www.narpo.org.uk), and should individuals require further advice they should contact Staffordshire NARPO. Branch and Sub branch officers will always provide assistance to members on an individual basis.

The Branch committee did not uphold the complaints against the Executive. A vote of confidence in the Branch Executive Officers was moved and passed.

Related, but separate to the above, the Branch Committee discussed a pressure group established under the name Injury on Duty Pensioners Association (IODPA). This group is not part of NARPO or affiliated to us. The group has a website and internet blog. Its members remain mostly anonymous and publishes articles and documents relating to IOD matters.

The group has been sending unsolicited anonymous e-mail invitations to people in Staffordshire promoting the IOD awards cause. National or local NARPO has no issues with members contacting the IODPA for advice, if they feel it is more appropriate for them. Branch officers have received queries from several people about these e-mails, including a serving officer and ordinary police pension members. We can reassure our members that we have not shared any member's information or e-mail addresses with them. It appears IODPA purchased commercial mailing lists and are using these to target potential recruits.

NARPO is here for all its members, including many who do not use e-mail and the internet. Our primary concern is to promote measures for the welfare of members with particular regard to pensions, which includes injury on duty awards.

Staffordshire NARPO Branch Committee.