



# WEST YORKSHIRE POLICE

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**Chief Constable**

30<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Martin Jordan BA (Hons)  
GMB UNION Shop Steward and  
Lead Health and Safety Representative  
GMB Union

**By Email Only**

Dear Martin

You have taken the decision to write to me in an open letter to your members, so I reply in the spirit that you will publish my reply in the same way.

Sadly, I feel you have put pen to paper, addressing me in such a blunt and personal manner, before taking the time to establish a few key facts.

I am sorry if any police staff colleague feels as you articulate. I genuinely am, I and colleagues had done everything to avoid that. However, the heart of the matter that you attribute to me was caused in the main by national and international factors out of my control.

Let me take you through a summary of the sequence of events for the issue of Police Staff Platinum Jubilee medallions to West Yorkshire Police staff colleagues.

The Home Office published the Cabinet Office's police related criteria for the issue for the medals as follows:

*Frontline emergency services personnel that have been in paid service, retained or in a voluntary capacity, dealing with emergencies as part of their conditions of service, and have completed five full calendar years of service on 6 February 2022.*

Many forces simply took the above criteria and awarded medals to their eligible police officers only.

This obviously would have excluded a significant number of our valued and experienced police staff colleagues in West Yorkshire, who provide essential services to the force that are not defined as 'dealing with emergencies' in a 'frontline' capacity. We picked up on this disparity on a national level but were not able to have it changed. So irrespective of that, we decided to ensure from the outset that a medallion was awarded to all police staff in West Yorkshire, with over five years' service, irrespective of role. Again, from my recollection this has never been done before and nor have police staff been recognised in this way at any previous Jubilee.

It was at each forces' discretion if they wanted to purchase medallions (from their own budget) for their staff and some forces chose at this stage not to be involved. West Yorkshire Police placed an order for all our police staff with over five years' service and we had no option but to use the national procurement process for the manufacturer and supplier.

Plans were put in place for officers and staff to be awarded their medals and medallions in exactly the same way and at the same time by District and Departmental Heads. I was instrumental in ensuring there was parity and I communicated that very clearly to Heads of Departments and Commanders. Again, this was in a way never done before by a Chief Constable in West Yorkshire Police at any previous Jubilee event. If that had happened, I suspect you would not have been writing to me.

Due to the international Covid related events and the war in Ukraine, the manufacturing company subsequently declared a supply issue due to the scarcity of raw materials, directly linked to both issues. They stated that the medallions would not be arriving to West Yorkshire until September. The Deputy Chief Constable wrote to the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) at the time to see if anything at all could be done to prevent this delay, but it was unavoidable.

The delay was totally out of our control and in the circumstances could not have been reasonably foreseen, namely Covid and Russia invading the Ukraine. So, we either issued no medals or medallions, so that they could be issued together, or we issued the medals on time. We took that decision, which I believe is the right one, but I knew and discussed at the time that it could be misinterpreted, so planned to communicate the reasons clearly.

The communication was announced as a force message as soon as we were informed of the delay. I therefore do not recognise the remark about many excuses been made for their delay. I also feel the associated remark of the harm this has done to our integrity and transparency is unfair. There was a single, clear force-wide communication made at the time and the message has not changed since. This was also communicated to all the individual Unions including James Wilson at GMB on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2022. If you do not read force messages or communicate effectively with your GMB colleagues, then I would suggest you perhaps should before sending me such an open letter.

Numerous forces faced this predicament and I must repeat that I believe the circumstances were not reasonably foreseeable or preventable by West Yorkshire Police. I wish it had not happened this way, because I knew cynics and negative voices in the organisation would make the accusation you have.

The medallions arrived in September and are now being distributed. We were disappointed when we saw they did not come in a presentation box, which was our expectation, and immediately looked at procuring these ourselves. However, the cost would have run to more than £15,000 and was therefore considered to be prohibitive after the significant investment of many thousands of pounds we had already made in the medallions themselves and the start of the public sector financial crisis.

Thankfully the production quality of the medallions and the medals are wholly comparative and it is only the lack of a presentation box that separates the two.

My expectation is still that Heads of Departments and Commanders issue their police staff medallions in exactly the same way as officers is still there. I am disappointed if that has not been happening locally. I will communicate with colleagues separately about this. I am also sorry if some individuals are still waiting to receive their medallions and I will reinforce that message to my colleagues.

In order to protect the frontline, we now have very limited Headquarters resources. It is right to point out that there was a significant amount of work by a single police staff employee on top of their normal workload to arrange the procurement and accurate distribution of thousands of medallions and medals. The logistics of distributing medals had similar minor delays in getting them to some police staff and police officer colleagues. Criticising a Chief Constable is perceived by some

as fair game, but it saddens me that you see fit to criticise your colleague (who may actually be a GMB member) in such a public way. I encourage you to offer them an apology for your outburst.

I could not disagree more strongly with your statement that police staff are less valued than police officers by senior leaders. Clearly none of us get things right all the time and we are still dealing with legacy issues and structures. I would have hoped that anyone who has worked with me knows that not to be the case for my personal approach and I do not see what you allege across the force. Nor do any of the recent surveys, focus groups or engagement opportunities.

I hope that you and your membership can see from the account above that the circumstances, despite all best efforts and good intentions, were genuinely out of our control in this instance. Communications were direct and formulated in conjunction with the GMB and Unison at the time we were informed of the delay, so I find it difficult to rationalise that you now consider this to be not genuine and lacking sincerity.

Lastly, this is the last time an award of this kind will carry the name of our late Queen Elizabeth II. Whether medallion or medal, it is a significant piece of history that I hope the majority of your members are happy to receive, notwithstanding the unavoidable delay in their delivery. I had rather hoped you would be part of the solution to any problems, rather than perpetuating accusations in such a non-collegiate way.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Robins". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**John Robins QPM DL**  
**Chief Constable**  
**West Yorkshire Police**

