

## #12 (IAN HESKETH)

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### Jerry Ratcliffe:

Jerry Ratcliffe here with Reducing Crime, a podcast featuring influential thinkers in the police service and leading crime and policing researchers. Dr. Ian Hesketh was a British police officer for 30 years, and is now the Wellbeing Lead at the UK College of Policing and the key leadership figure for the National Police Wellbeing Service. We talk about officer wellness and resiliency in the face of mounting challenges. Find out more in this podcast and on Twitter @\_reducingcrime.

Hi, before I get into this episode, I'd like to quickly tell you about a three day training program I'm facilitating in September, 2019. From the 24th to the 26th, I'll be running a police commanders crime reduction course in beautiful downtown Philadelphia. This course is ideally suited to mid-level police command staff, and is the only authorized training program accompanying the book 'Reducing Crime: A Companion for Police Leaders'. Details can be found on the web at [reducingcrime.com/events](http://reducingcrime.com/events).

Dr. Ian Hesketh served as a British police officer for 30 years, working in a number of specialist roles, including the Armed Response Unit and Mountain Branch. He was also seconded to the United Nations and worked on peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, post-war Kosovo and Serbia. He's now the Wellbeing Lead at the UK College of Policing and the Senior Responsible Owner for the National Police Wellbeing Service in the UK. I've no idea if there are any irresponsible owners. Ian also supports the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Manchester University's Alliance Business School, and is a visiting fellow at the Open University Business School.

His research interests are centered on wellbeing, resilience, and transformation in the context of policing. And most notably, he introduced the concept of leaveism, which we discuss in this episode. In 2012, his article on transformational leadership during change was voted one of the top five management articles by the Chartered Management Institute. I sat down with Ian during a short lull in the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing Conference in Cincinnati. As you'll hear, leaveism and the two reasons for it are becoming a significant issue in policing. Line managers are central to officer wellbeing and there are leadership lessons to be learned from being slapped by a monkey. Yes, you heard that right.

### Ian Hesketh:

Do you know, I think this is probably one of the better conferences.

### Jerry Ratcliffe:

It is, isn't it?

### Ian Hesketh:

And I'm not sure why, but I think it's probably because the people that come to are on a similar sort of-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The right wavelength?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And a bit more normal.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. Well mostly, you have a lot of either chiefs or it's overly academic, it's a nice balance here, isn't there?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Which I think is the way forward actually. The English one doesn't tend to somehow feel like that. It's almost like forced.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Too many chiefs?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Probably, yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The tricky thing about finding the right balance is that I think chiefs has done so well under the old regime, they did great under 30 years of the old way of doing things and they're not going to be around long enough to really have any incentive to change.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No, they're hanging on as well. The Police and Crime Commissioner thing has just sent that into orbit, really, with what is required of a chief. And now sort of the vision that actually PCC can bring it all to an end pretty quickly, which they didn't have under the Policing Authority. I think it's put a whole new landscape to it, which is interesting in itself. And I've seen it obviously.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You started off doing them as an apprenticeship as an electrician?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You were going to be a sparky.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Do you ever regret leaving that?

**Ian Hesketh:**

No, never. I enjoyed that electrician, but British Aerospace who I worked for, which was the old BAC, just finished the tornado contract. It was moving onto what is now the Eurofighter, but the Eurofighter wasn't certain. So the workforce were actually under considerable threat of either being completely all made redundant or gone onto a very restricted working week.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But that was over 30 years ago?

**Ian Hesketh:**

It was, but it cycles though. And the Eurofighter is out now with typhoon, everything went swimmingly, but it didn't then. A lot of people left.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I mean, we have this worry about how long it takes innovation, but yeah, it is taking decades to build a fighter aircraft.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. Yeah. Well, they're just now replacing that with the American Romano.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So you joined the job at 20 and then you ended up going through education?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it, learned a ton.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How many years did you have in before? Because you did a bunch of things, armed response, and a range of other things. How many years did you have in before you decided that you went for your education, your MBA and stuff?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Right, well that, like most things in my life, probably came slightly accidentally to me. And it was the Human Rights Act, we were doing the preliminary training for it. And at the time there was an edict saying actually to teach in policing, you have to have a teaching degree to teach adult education. So Lancashire Constabulary, which has always been forward-thinking, always been known for being a step ahead, planned to say, "Right, okay, this is going to be an

enormous roll out. Let's get ourselves prepared." Basically, they threw it open, said, "Who wants to go and do a teaching degree?"

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, there you go.

**Ian Hesketh:**

And that there I went. There you go, and there I went, yeah. So I went and studied part time and really enjoyed it and then continued on.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And then you went to study advanced leadership strategy?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it, yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

What's the difference between that and just leadership strategy, what's the advanced part?

**Ian Hesketh:**

I think the advanced part is because they pay the instructional staff lots more than the basic ones.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, there you go. It's the same course, but it feels more quality.

**Ian Hesketh:**

So they had a guy called Ken Parry who came over from Bond, he was brilliant, Australia.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

James? Oh, Bond University in Australia.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, in Australia, he came over and run the the advanced leadership with Steve Kempster and they ran the course together, which I must say it was absolutely fantastic. And it's the first time I've ever used it, but they have this concept of using videos and you researched the video, and then sort of reported back what the video told you about leadership. And our video was Night at the Museum.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, good grief.

**Ian Hesketh:**

And we studied the leadership capabilities of the characters in the show. And then we've presented that back, have to say what was the leadership styles within Night of the Museum, one by the way, not even the second or the third.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And I suspect the only one that's really relevant to policing would be the Keystone cops, right?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Or the monkey slapping incident. Yeah. That was it. It was really good, actually.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I'm dying to know what are the leadership lessons from Owen Wilson's character being slapped by a monkey in Night at the Museum?

**Ian Hesketh:**

I think the lesson was-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Don't get slapped by a monkey?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Don't get slapped by a monkey, but he was put in a position where he had to lead otherwise it was chaos. So his character, the porter, had to show some leadership to get everything back in order and it wasn't his natural attributes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And I should just say at this point, for anybody listening to this, please don't Google slapping the monkey.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, especially on your work's computer. Yeah, so it was good. It was really good.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But from that you started really getting into thinking about officer wellness?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That came from MBA studies. We were looking at, I think it was the organizational design module and I had a really good tutor call Phil Jones and he was really interested in this, in wellbeing as we-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And for organizations, generally, right?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, we talk about in the UK was just coming to the front as a field that actually could alter the productivity and performance in organizations.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So this whole idea of wellness and wellbeing is relatively recent then?

**Ian Hesketh:**

In the UK, I would say. Yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I think so in the States, and especially in terms of policing.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, yeah. So Professor Cary Cooper was at Lancaster University where I started at, I met with him and he said, "Well, why don't we do a big study in policing?" And I undertook to do that obviously went on to a PhD program, which I must say was absolutely fantastic. I really, really enjoyed it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You're one of the few people to actually say that about PhD program.

**Ian Hesketh:**

I think because I had two fantastic supervisors who stayed with us every step of the way. I did it part time with the full backing again of Lancashire Constabulary and was able to have a workplace to both test, pilot implement, look at what's working, what's not working, how cops see different things, the perceptions and attitudes of then, which are different. I mean, nobody had really heard of it as a concept, even.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The quality of supervision for PhD programs, I think, is everything. It's absolutely everything.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, absolutely. I enjoyed two extremely good people who were just so supportive.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And you were in the job at the same time?

**Ian Hesketh:**

And the job, I had everything I must admit. And I kept doing operational duties. I didn't depart from that until I got sort of two or three years into it and then I went on the Corporate Development Department because the old constabularies in the UK were answering their comprehensive spending review.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

This is a bit radical. So the job actually saw that you had a specialized skill set that they could use in a particular role and actually used you in that role? This is almost unheard of in modern policing.

**Ian Hesketh:**

The Chief Constable of Lancashire now, Andy Rhodes, was then an ACC, recognized sort of how useful that would be.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I hear so many stories here at the American Society of Evidence-Based Policing Conference about people having skillsets in evidence-based policing. And so their departments say, "Okay, well let's put you in transit or in traffic or in something completely unrelated," I'm going, "You have this person with a skillset, why would you do this?" So it was nice to hear that you actually found someone.

**Ian Hesketh:**

It can be frustrating. Yeah. But again, I think some of it is around the social skill of aligning yourself to people who will make that difference and making sure that you can negotiate that contract with them and who the right are people to go with. And there are people that are not interested. And really, there's not point in trying to engage when that's clearly the case. You have to engage with people who are really interested in this subject area, and there are a lot of them now. There's lots of them.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But for the rest of them, these evidence-based policing deplorables, we should just ignore them and move past them?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Rob [inaudible 00:09:58] he anecdotally said with evidence-based champions, people who would go, "I'm the evidence-based guy, is everything going okay here? And what's the evidence about that?" Although he said that in jest, some people do that, whether they're doing it on purpose or not, I'm not sure. But I think that to some officers, they think, "What do you know? I have got jobs coming out my ears. We've got all this demand on us. I've not got the capabilities to let you go off doing this study or attending this conference. We need you here on the front line." And then suddenly you have an occupation that people aren't asking to join. That's the result of this if you don't embrace this sort of developments opportunities.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

By not actually looking after people by not actually developing and becoming a real profession, it feels like it's still where we were 30 years ago. And I follow a lot of policing Twitter and policing Twitter is the same, what the hell is the point of evidence-based policing? Well, not all of it has to be relevant to your particular frontline job.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No, it's not.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

A big part of it is just how to manage the organization to be better and healthier and safer.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yep. Well, with studying sort of wellbeing type topics, if you wish, a lot of the evidence base is towards criminology of course. So the things that I'm interested in are not necessarily, I mean, we've just heard from David Weisberg there about hotspot policing and things like that, I'm not overly interested in that. But what I can see is the links between offices being told to go and stand in an area and how they feel about autonomy and being in charge of deciding what criminal investigations to do. So in terms of their wellbeing, they will feel like they're not at liberty to actually police how they feel they should do.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So the challenge then is that some of them won't have a clue where to stand, but they think they know where to stand?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, and how are you developing a personality where you're just saying, "Okay, I want you to police that street today," with no notion of why.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Or explanation as to how we came by this and what the benefits were and the cons were?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's right.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So what you're saying is that a degree of organizational wellbeing relates to how we think about implementing things like evidence-based policing?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Completely. So you see that with body-worn video, you can see it with taser usage, we've heard about that this week here. So I heard yesterday from a chap from the railways in central London and what he was saying is they've introduced body-worn video and the union said, "Oh no, we're spying on our people which actually do the ticketing." So they're looking after revenue, if you wish.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Like a casino?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it. And they'll say, "No, wear body-worn videos." So at the beginning of his trial, he describes the unions were taking some convincing to allow this to happen, and then of course you have instances where the staff don't turn them on or they break or they're facing the wrong way, or they don't record key moments. But he explained that at the end of it, actually the unions are saying, "Oh, you need to give these to everybody," because actually the experiment proved that assaults on staff drop by, I think he modeled 48%.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So by reframing it originally, they could have got to that outcome so much more quickly by just reframing how they sold it to the unions and the membership I'm guessing?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, I think so. So back to my argument before around knowing the right people to engage with and the right people to say, "Actually, is it a waste of time almost trying to convince this person?" It's about getting the right contacts who are interested in this stuff and there's lots of them and going and saying, "Right, actually this could make a real difference in the number of staff that are being assaulted." Similar to hotspot policing.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**



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Now you've developed all of this work and your thoughts into a role now as the Lead for Wellbeing, for the College of Policing in the UK?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, so I'm the Senior Responsible Owner for the National Police Wellbeing Service for the UK.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And what are the core components that you're going out, and what's the message that you're spreading?

**Ian Hesketh:**

It was launched at the beginning of May by the Policing Minister in the UK.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

May, 2019?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. So up until that point, we've been doing pilot studies and a lot of what we've heard today, looking at experiments, what works, what doesn't work, what's successful, what needs tweaking. So a lot of things have been tested in other contexts. So does that work in policing? And a lot of good people have been working with us, especially universities throughout the UK, different police forces on different areas of it. Now we have eight service offerings that we're rolling out over the next year or two in terms of life service/

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And what sort of areas do they focus on?

**Ian Hesketh:**

A lot of it is on line management.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Really?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Absolutely.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So the role of management is the key to officer wellbeing?

**Ian Hesketh:**

If we look at any survey that we've done throughout policing and looking at other surveys from staff associations, police forces, our own survey work, university surveys, front and center of any wellbeing is the line manager.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

What is it we're doing then, is it a training issue? Is it a selection issue for line managers?

**Ian Hesketh:**

I think it's the change in dynamic of work, the impact of technology, the changing nature of crime, the changing nature of society. There's lots of things that impact on it. So it's not=

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So the job's not the same as it was when those line managers were officers and actually on the street themselves?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's right, yeah. And I think most people can see that that's the case. But again, I'm not defending people, but there's an overwhelming workload coming in now.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's certainly the case in the UK because the austerity, the financial austerity, that's driven a lot of people out of policing and the cuts in policing in the UK have not been matched by that same level of austerity in other countries like the US or Canada or Australia, New Zealand. So it might be hard for people to understand just how difficult it's become. We're talking about a drop in the police service of more than 20% in terms of numbers and increased workloads for the people that remain. And I think somebody told me yesterday that most of the people on the streets now are youngsters, probationers.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. Yeah. I think that's varied across the force. I don't have the exact figures, but-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Lots of experience there?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That seems to be the case. And don't forget, within the 30 year tenure, as most of officers set off, 30 years ago, there were huge cohorts joining, 200, 300 on each cohort every couple of months. And now of course, all those are retiring.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I joined 35 years ago and there were cops everywhere by comparison to nowadays.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. And you see increasing demand, and the accessibility of police. So if you were on a motorway in England and there was an accident, you'd have to stop at a junction box and ring in, and only one person could use that junction box at one time. Feasibly, now that you have thousands of calls in for an accident or another incident, officers are faced by when they turn up at an incident, they can have 10 or 11 people recording that on a mobile phone.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I think I would have been terrified that there would be the proliferation of cameras when I was a young cop, 19 years old on the street wandering around. I mean, I remember one day looking at something as I'm walking along and going flat out straight into a lamppost. That would have become a meme now and I'd have been instantly infamous for doing something incredibly stupid. I mean, you could get away with more and I don't mean in a nefarious sense, but there was just more latitude, but now everything is being videoed.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. Everything, yeah. And I mean, even social media, nearly every day, there is an incident recording on social media where cops are being assaulted, shot at, stabbed, et cetera, et cetera. I mean, we've seen at this conference use of taser, it's all out there, it's on social media immediately. We struggle to control it. Even some of the awful terrorist attacks have been videoed live around the world on several occasions now, before they've been taken offline. And the stress that that causes and vicarious trauma, of course, we've just not really got on top of how we are helping our officers in any meaningful way. And part of our program is to look at that post-trauma response for policing, so how do we look after our officers and staff?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

How does it affect personal resiliency? Because I understand that that is kind of a core to sustaining your own personal wellness over a long career, because you have to pace yourself over 20, 30 years.

**Ian Hesketh:**

You do. One of the areas that we are keen to look at and we've done lots of research is, how do we improve an officer's personal resilience? And a lot of that is about awareness, awareness about how you operate, how you think about things, how you deal with stresses, how you unload, how you diffuse, how you recover, how you know when your ability to cope is reaching its threshold, which is really important and knowing where that threshold is. And also we've got the additional responsibility that we're trying to impart on people that it's about looking after each other. So even if you don't spot it yourself, are others around you who know you reasonably well enjoying an environment where they can go up to you and say, "Jerry, you look like you're not coping with this very well, is there anything we can do?" And then having made that approach, then the organizations have to have something in place for you to access.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And we never had that kind of stuff before.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

When I worked in central London on the Diplomatic Protection Group, if you had a problem, what you'd often do is sit in a car and you'd tell Jim in confidence and then Jim would tell absolutely everybody and then it would cease to be a problem at that point. But that informal mechanism has to be backed up by some kind of organizational support with the pressure that people are under.

**Ian Hesketh:**

And what you have is there. So we're trying to create an environment in which it's okay to come and say, "I'm not okay." So that's sort of the vision for us. When people then come up with and say, "Listen, I'm not okay," what have we got in place now for them to access to make them right? So if it's a physical injury, it's a fairly straightforward recovery path. So, you break your ankle, you go and get it set up or whatever and then you have physio and then back to full health and you're up and running again. Psychological issues are a lot more complex, they're individual. And they can take a lot of time to recover from.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And there's a stigma associated with talking about it?

**Ian Hesketh:**

There's a stigma associated. So for example, firearms. In most forces, if you said you were struggling, depressed, the first thing would be the ticket would come off.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Yeah, you take away of your permission to be issued with firearms.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yes. So within some forces now, the police service in Northern Ireland, they're an armed force.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But what concerns me about that is that I would actually sooner work alongside people who were open and upfront in dealing with these issues than suppressing them, coming to work and not being fit for the job and standing next to me with a firearm.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yep. So if you're on antidepressants, for example, for a condition, are you managing that condition or are you a risk with your colleagues and the community? What lens are we looking at that through? And this is difficult. And this is challenging for chief officers, really is challenging. So are people managing the condition or are they posing a risk to the public and their colleagues?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I had a student in one of my classes come and say that she really wanted to join policing, but she had a history of depression in her background and was worried that it might impact on her likelihood of joining the department. And I was thinking to myself, that seems the wrong way around. You've actually identified it. You've dealt with it. And it gives you a perspective of dealing with the public that other officers may not have. And yet that could all be seen as a bar because officers are just seeing risk and liability, police departments, I should say.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Well, it's the same with adverse childhood experiences, A scores, as they're known. If you've lived a life, if you've been exposed to some things, does that leave you vulnerable or does that actually make you stronger? Does that give you more experience in dealing with others because you have more empathy, compassion, sympathy with sort of the deal for other people?

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You only have to be in policing a few months to figure out that you're not spending every day dealing with people for whom life has been absolutely awesome.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Well, no, it's not. In fact, it's almost never.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's right. It's rarity and it's a pleasant cause.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, so if that goes into the cad, it's unlikely anybody will be dispatched.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's right. Yeah. "I'd like to call the police." "Why?" "Because things are going really good for me at the moment."

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. Yeah. And that's the case, isn't it? And of course there's the fact that we are dealing with lots of other agencies' work now.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Is this to some degree, the stigma associated with really addressing officer wellness and behavioral health issues, is this driving some of this concept of leaveism that you've talked about?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yes. For sure. So leaveism is a concept that actually officers and staff or anybody for that matter have the option of if they're feeling well, going off sick, absence. And we know from Gary John's work primarily that people turn up to work while they're unwell, so the notion of presenteeism. When I was doing the studies, we noticed that actually there's a third phenomenon, which we labeled believism where people actually through various reasons when they're unwell take time off from annual leave allocations or flexi time.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So they're legitimately unwell and could take sick leave, but they're not taking the sick leave, instead they're using up their personal vacation allowance?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Vacation allowance. So there's two reasons, actually, one is immense loyalty to the organization where they feel somehow that letting them down if they go off sick.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Even though it's for good behavioral health issues.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yep. Where they think loyalty, and they're trying to protect a perfect sickness record which of course then is used in some promotional development opportunities. So they see it as a HR issue. And then you have people who are in fear of sanction, so in fear of redundancy, in fear of downgrading, in fear of not having development opportunities afforded them. So they take time off instead of reporting. And then we have a couple of further elements to it, which look at people taking excessive amounts of work home with them that they just simply can't deal with in work's time.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Really?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah, and on holiday often as well.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Oh, good grief.

**Ian Hesketh:**

So a lot of senior ranks in the police report that.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That's a problem in academia as well, people can't switch off and they can't take vacations.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No, I mean, there is a difference between enjoying your working life or being forced into having to take it home because you just can't get it done in the normal appointed hours. And they're two very different things. What we introduce that aspect of leaveism for us to say to line managers, "Look, understand what's going on here. Just because it looks like people are attending work, they look reasonably well, make sure that you understand enough about the people that work for you that you understand what's going on."

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Doesn't that also require the organization to have the flexibility to be able to use that for people who use excessive amounts of leave, if they want to use that as a promotion criteria, but also to be able to differentiate between people who are legitimately dealing with complex issues, personal issues?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. Lots of people have dependents, but what we see now is this so-called sandwich generation. People are looking after both young people, their sons and daughters, but also looking after elderly relatives. And some people will look after both which takes enormous amounts of-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right, and the baby boomer generation passing into the stage where they need a lot of help.

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it. A lot of people have got a lot on their plates in their personal life, and then they're coming into the working life, which is almost an inconvenience and having to do within policing an extremely stressful job for a long amount of time.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And they're terrified of taking leave even when they're genuinely unwell?

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's right, yeah.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

We've got the situation where people have got elderly parents, they've got kids in school, they're coming to work and there are fewer colleagues because of austerity, they're under huge amounts of pressure, that must be having all sorts of other implications for them at work.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Definitely. One of the things that we've noticed is that unless we have a culture where we support each other, where there's good supervision, where there's access to support outside of the organization, what we have is lots of fatigue, lots of tiredness, lots of underlying welfare issues.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

And that must have huge implications, especially around firearms officers. I mean, it's huge here in the United States where everybody carries a gun, but on top of that, people in some departments don't have high salaries and so people are doing second jobs as well, which may be another issue.

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it. And the commute times we're finding have risen considerably. I mean, you will recall, Jerry, when we joined, you had to live in the jurisdiction. That's not so. Officers can be traveling two hours to work quite regularly.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Most officers, a lot of officers I worked with, lived as far out as Epping Forest in the East end of London, because it's as far as you could go to find a nice place to live.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yeah. And what's more, they're not using public transport, of course, they're driving, so essentially they're increasing the working day by four hours. And we've had some horrendous accident of officers and staff members coming to and from work, including fatalities, which is awful.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Has there been, though, a net health benefit by allowing officers to live where they want to live in places that they feel are safer with better schools? Isn't that a reasonable trade off to the fact that they have longer commute times?

**Ian Hesketh:**

It is. And I think if we haven't got that offering, we would struggle to recruit people because I think as a minimum, all people now would expect to have a choice in where they live, quite rightly in my view.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

You get a mental health benefit to some degree living where you want to live. But during my career, I can off the top of my head think of two or three officers, actually myself included, who had traffic accidents on the way home from a night shift because of the shift work.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yep. And that is commonplace. Lois James here in [inaudible 00:27:36] from Washington State have done some amazing work with fatigue and driving, sleep patterns. And again, our understanding of sleep is getting better and better and better and now what different sleep stages are, how to improve sleep, things around nutrition.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Brian and Lois' work is really innovative.

**Ian Hesketh:**

It's fantastic. Yeah, it's fantastic. I was just speaking to Lois before, actually, about some next steps and we've put them together with some colleagues in the UK to look at some potential joint work, which again is what these conferences are all about. It's about joining people together with similar interests.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's finding the innovative work.

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's right.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

But these issues of shift work and long working hours, and then long commutes, these have been issues for decades. We're only really getting a good grasp of it now?

**Ian Hesketh:**

I think a number of things are emerging here. One of them is that there is no effective downtime now, and this is, in my own experiences-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Is this while you're actually at work?

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yes.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's just constant call after call after call?

**Ian Hesketh:**

So in my own experiences, so if we worked a week of night shifts, okay Friday, Saturday, Sunday would be nonstop, every cycle. Those times, sort of Tuesday, Wednesday, maybe Thursday, there wouldn't be an awful lot going on.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

After about 2:00 AM, it's dead, even in the East end of London where I was.

**Ian Hesketh:**



And the challenge then was staying awake. Now that is clearly not the case now. It is just absolutely nonstop. Whatever time of day or night, officers and staff members are responding to calls, often of a really challenging nature 24/7. There is little downtime. One of the consequences of that is the officers aren't refreshing or resting mid-shift.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Right, I mean, we never used to eat that healthily anyway.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No. Yeah, of course. Yeah. But our understanding of nutrition now of how body works, how sleep cycles, of neuropsychology is improving no end. So we know a little bit more about what's going on going on with our bodies now. And it's up to us as leaders, really, to make sure that we impart that and provide-

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's a challenge, isn't it?

**Ian Hesketh:**

It's a big challenge.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

I mean, you're under police jurisdictions, you can't get a salad on anybody's jurisdiction at the best of times let alone at two o'clock in the morning.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No, I mean you have your 7-Elevens or in the UK, it's the gas stations where you pick up something on the run, ping it in the microwave, or it's cold and valueless.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

They're not known for being the whole foods of the driving economy.

**Ian Hesketh:**

No it's not. So this notion of preparing your nutrition for night shifts is something that we need to explore further as well.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

The night shift carries a thing of the past.

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it. Yep. Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

So you're painting us a picture where it's the job's getting harder, the stresses and the pressures, the officer wellness's challenges are increasing, not decreasing.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Yep.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Well, I'm glad guys that you are invested in the work and doing it with us.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Well what we have done in positive terms for that is that our understanding is there. We have great people working on it, producing evidence to support our interventions, and we actually have now a group of people and lots of senior leaders now that are absolutely committed to making working life as good as it possibly can for officers and staff.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

It's an innovative field, it's moving quickly and this is where it's got to go.

**Ian Hesketh:**

That's it.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

Ian, thanks very much for your time.

**Ian Hesketh:**

Thanks Jerry.

**Jerry Ratcliffe:**

That was episode 12 of Reducing Crime, recorded in Cincinnati in May of 2019. You can find more episodes like this at [reducingcrime.com](http://reducingcrime.com) or the usual podcast-y places. New episodes are announced on Twitter @\_reducingcrime. Don't forget the underscore. Be safe and best of luck.