



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD
7th January 2014

Human Resources Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. As part of the regular schedule of Human Resource updates, this report provides details across a number of areas of current HR activity.

WORKFORCE RESOURCING

2. The Board will be aware that the HR Function is currently engaged in a number of workforce initiatives which are aimed at improving resilience and policing delivery. These include:
 - (a) Recruitment of 50 Specials & 50 PCSOs

Recruitment for both sets of posts is now in its final stages. The first intake of 16 Special Constables is scheduled to commence training on 10 January, with the remainder of the intake commencing training on 21 February and 4 April. Currently these groups are undergoing pre employment screening (vetting/medical clearance etc). The PCSO intake will commence employment with Force on three separate training courses, scheduled for 17 & 24 February and 17 March. This group of staff are also currently undergoing pre employment screening.

Posting of the new Specials and PCSOs is being managed through an allocation model, linked to roll out of the Continuous Improvement Change Programme, to ensure that the requirements of LPUs are properly prioritised.

- (b) Police Officer recruitment Proposals

Planning for the proposed recruitment of 450 Police Officers over the 2014/15 and 15/16 is well advanced and will be subject of a separate briefing to the PCC later in January. At this stage the focus is on ensuring that the process is robust and able to manage the expected high level of applicant interest, given it is over 4 years since the Force last ran an active recruitment programme. Changes in applicant expectations and the need to maximise efficiency means that the process is likely to have a more significant on-line element. The details of this are currently being scoped out.

As part of the Winsor Review, the Force has discretion on the starting salaries of new police recruits within a range of £19k to £22k. Other Forces within the area, who are recruiting have opted for a starting salary of £21,999pa. The Force is recommended to adopt the same position which reflects a potentially more competitive labour market going forward, and the priority to recruit high calibre officers.

The Police Officer workforce, compared to local communities in the West Midlands is under represented in relation to younger officers and those from BME communities. These will be important considerations in design of the Recruitment marketing strategy. Work with LPU Commanders on the engagement of local neighbourhood officers and PCSOs in the strategy is taking place, along with input from third sector/community groups and other partners. The work is also being informed by a Community Reference Group, chaired by Chief Superintendent Richard Moore

(c) Workforce Mix

The Board will be aware that as part of the 2013/14 budget 100 Police posts were approved for conversion to Police Staff positions. The posts were located in a number of functions, including Crime Services, Central Justice, Operational Planning and Crime Reduction. It is proposed that a further 100 Police Posts are converted to Police Staff during the next financial year. Subject to the necessary budget being approved the posts identified for conversion include Safeguarding Investigators, Homicide Investigators and Exhibits and Disclosure Officers

Work on the role profiles for these posts is underway so that a prompt start can be made to any recruitment process.

(d) Senior Management Review

This review is designed to align senior management portfolios with the other workforce change programmes which have taken place since 2010, and to ensure Force management structures are fit for purpose going forward. About 160 police and police staff posts were originally in scope of the review, which is now in its final phase. As a result of the process 18 Police Staff managers were put at risk in accordance with the Force Organisational Change Policy, although at this stage it is expected that the overall impact on individuals will now be less significant, due to turnover factors etc.

In relation to Senior Police Officers posts the review projects a reduction of c. 8 posts across the Chief Inspector, Superintendent and Chief Superintendent ranks. A number of the affected posts are currently, or will become vacant as result of normal turnover and will be removed from the Police Officer establishment over the course of 2014.

WORKFORCE DUTY OF CARE

3. The Board may be aware that two “Duty of Care” initiatives have been taken forward since it received the last HR Update. These are:

- (a) Police Officer Fitness Testing

The Board have received previous updates on the introduction of a fitness testing programme, as part of the Winsor Review recommendations. Command Team have subsequently approved the introduction of the “Chester Step” Test, which meets the requirements of a validated test, suitable for use within the Police Service. The test involves stepping onto and off a step at increasing speed with individual fitness being measured through effect on heart rate. An additional element is being introduced to process, involving a short health “MOT” which will include a health & fitness questionnaire and an eyesight test (if required), review of attendance and lifestyle review. The whole process should be completed within 30 minutes

Introduction of the Chester Step represents a cost effective option for the Force and one which takes into account the availability of suitable accommodation in which to conduct the tests. It carries the added business benefit of being able to be conducted at local level and therefore maintains workforce resilience.

Work on implementing the test in spring 2014 is being progressed.

- (b) Trauma Risk Management (TRiM)

The Force recognises that certain operational activities can be traumatic for Officers and Staff, either because of their nature e.g. Public Protection, Motorway Policing etc, and/or as a result of the impact on colleagues and teams. Historically support to individuals believed to be suffering from mental trauma, as a result of attendance at critical incidents has been delivered by Occupational Health, supported by teams of in house Diffusers and Debriefers. These individuals were recruited on a volunteer basis providing support, in addition to their substantive full time roles.

Occupational Health Practitioners have in recent years questioned whether this approach is effective, given the evidence that c. 90% of individuals recover naturally over time after a traumatic event and that some short term changes in behaviour should be expected. NICE recommends that over a 6/8 week period following an incident individuals behaviour should be kept under review by Managers (referred to as “Watchful Waiting”), and that Occupational Health intervention should only be considered, after that period, if observed changes in behaviour persist. The “Watchful Waiting” approach requires that Line Managers have the necessary understanding of behaviours to observe and when to alert Occupational Health if issues arise.

To ensure Force reflects best practice in this area a revised approach to the delivery of support to Officers and staff has been agreed. This involves the provision of training to line managers to enable them to identify whether changes in individual behaviours require additional Occupational Health intervention, or whether they can be managed as part of a normal recovery process. In the first instance line managers supervising staff in those activities recognised as having most exposure to critical incidents will receive training as a priority. It can then be rolled out on a phased basis.

STAGE TWO TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

4. In November last year, all police staff transferred from the employment of the Police Authority to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Under the arrangements the PCC and the Chief Constable were then required to agree on a second transfer of certain staff groups who would transfer to the Chief Constable on 1 April 2014, this to be subject to approval by the Home Secretary.
The Home Secretary has now agreed the proposals and confirmed that all police staff, other than those currently employed within the office of the PCC will transfer to the employment of the Chief Constable on 1 April 2014.
5. All staff received a letter jointly signed by the Chief Executive to the Office of the PCC and the Chief Constable before Christmas, notifying them of the transfer arrangements. This included confirmation that there is no break in the continuity of employment, or any change to contractual terms and conditions, including pension entitlements. A set of FAQs has been developed and placed on the intranet site to assist staff with any queries they may have.
6. A number of Police Staff Appeal Procedures are being revised in consultation with the Trade Unions. These primarily concern appeals against dismissal, which after 1 April will no longer be heard by the PCC. Staff will be notified of the changes by Message of the Day, once these are formally agreed. The arrangements do not affect police officers who remain under the direction and control of the Chief Constable. This position will also be confirmed via Message of The Day.

RECOMMENDATION

7. The Strategic Policing and Crime Board are asked to note the contents of this paper and to specifically agree the recommendation that the starting salary for new recruits be set at £21,999 pa (reference paragraph 3(b)).

Chris Rowson
Head of HR