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Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley

## **UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF POLICE OFFICERS**

### **Report to Police & Crime Panel**

### **18<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the Panel with an update on the recruitment and retention of police officers.

#### **Recruitment**

2. We now have more police officer in Thames Valley than ever before. Thanks to the Uplift programme the headcount of warranted officers stands at 4,772. Whilst recruitment continues apace through the Home Office funded Uplift programme there will always be officers who leave the Force due to retirement, resignation or dismissal. The Force seeks to anticipate this turnover throughout the year and although it can vary from month to month the dynamic planning of intakes has ensure that Thames Valley Police remain on track to meet the overall uplift target by the end of the financial year.
3. This means that by March 2023 the Force will reach a strength of 4,859 and current profiling suggests that numbers will exceed this target. The Home Office is offering one off funding in 23/24 for every officer recruited above target to a ceiling agreed nationally, yet to be confirmed for TVP.
4. Application levels from BAME and female applicants remain strong. Currently 44% of applicants in the pipeline are women and 22% from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Year to date 14% of officer joiners are from BAME backgrounds and 43% are women. According to national monitoring data TVP's current representation figures are 36.9% female and 6.5% from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
5. Recruitment levels will remain higher than pre Uplift levels at least through 2023/24 to ensure that these higher headcount levels are maintained.
6. The strongest officer recruitment pipeline remains the IPLDP+ route, which is due to end at March 2023. The PCC has joined with others nationally in calling on the Home Office to extend the use of this entry route outside of PEQF and to secure a long term non-degree route into policing.
7. Nevertheless measures are being taken to improve attraction and offset the potential loss of the IPLDP+ entry route include:

- i. The creation of a new Bursary Scheme. This will be the first in the country and is being designed with the support of the College of Policing. The proposal is that students undertaking the Degree in Professional Policing on a full time basis and at their own expense will be offered financial support in each of the three years, in return for which they will join TVP on graduation.
- ii. Work aiming to make TVP an employer of choice for veterans leaving military service. It is proposed to offer a one-off payment of £2,500 to any veteran joining TVP as an officer as their first employer on leaving military service. We are also exploring the possibility of extending this initiative to police staff recruitment, potentially with a lower payment of £1,500. In support of this initiative officers have been attending Forces resettlement events around the country, forming active partnerships with the various regimental secretaries and planning a military recruitment event to be held in Force early next year.
- iii. Reviewing the marketing for the PCDA and DHP entry routes. A particular aim here, having reviewed the age profile of PCDA recruits is to improve the attractiveness of this entry route for more mature applicants who may be deterred by the concept of an apprenticeship.
- iv. Conducting further targeted recruitment events in Force building on the success of recent events in Slough and Oxford.

## **Retention**

8. As well as exploring a variety of ways to maintain applicant numbers we also remain focussed on understanding and addressing the reasons for the levels of officer turnover. Analysis of turnover in September and October indicates a greater proportion of officers who are leaving are transferring to other Forces. This may be indicative of a temporary spike in transfers out ahead of the moratorium on officer transfers in Q4 of this financial year.
9. A new Retention Officer post has been created and recruited using Uplift funding. This post will enable the Force to, for example, drive compliance with new exit processes designed to gather information on the reasons for turnover enabling better analysis and understanding. However it also provides a resource to trial proactive measures to identify and intervene earlier with officers considering leaving TVP as well as to problem solve and develop further initiatives to aid retention.
10. We have now passed the point at which we effectively need to have received sufficient applications to populate intakes for the remainder of the financial year and our recruitment team is confident that they have sufficient applicants in the pipeline.

However as a result it is even more critical that we minimise candidate attrition through the recruitment process.

11. As above officer turnover increased in August and September and indications are that officer turnover in October continues at similar levels. Analysis of the reasons for leaving would suggest that this increase may be as a result of officers seeking to transfer before the start of the moratorium on officer transfers to Home Office Forces in January. We have adjusted our turnover forecasts and our modelling continues to suggest that we will at least meet our Uplift target at the end the financial year.
12. National analysis of the profile of officers resigning from the service suggests that the largest group of leavers is within years 1 and 3 of service. The high numbers of probationary officers within TVP therefore is likely to lead to continued high levels of officer turnover in 2023/2024.
13. Whilst Uplift funding has been allocated to increase capacity in enabling resource functions such as workforce planning, training and accreditation, recruitment challenges continue to pose a risk to maintaining this capacity. Areas of particular concern include driver training, Personal Safety Training and Workforce Planning.
14. Abstractions caused by overlapping periods of Protected Learning Time and measures required to mitigate them remain a significant risk to resilience in ICR and Neighbourhood Policing Teams in particular and to the morale and wellbeing of frontline officers. Work is being undertaken to identify options for posting/management of new student officers to reduce these impacts.