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Wednesday 18th May 2022

Criminal Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Tel: 0131 348 5195
Textphone: 0800 092 7100
justicecommittee@parliament.scot



David Page
Deputy Chief Officer
Corporate Services, People & Strategy
Police Scotland Headquarters
Tulliallan Castle
Kincardine
Fife
FK10 4BE
DeputyChiefOfficer@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Dear Ms Nicoll,

PENSION CHANGES AND THE IMPACT ON STAFF NUMBERS

I write in reference to your letter dated 22 April 2022 to the Chief Constable, where you ask for an assessment on the impact of the recent Police Pension changes. I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

Police Scotland sees on average 812 officers leave the organisation annually.

Already during quarter 1 of this calendar year we have seen 321 officers leave the organisation, an increase of 69% on the normal 190 officers, which is the 5 year average for this period. This increase is directly related to retirements.

A total of 735 officers to date, (this includes the 321) have informed Police Scotland they are going to retire or have in fact already retired, which effects mainly quarters 1 & 2 only.

With the changes to the pension commutation calculation there are currently 1386 officers either eligible to take advantage of the change and leave now or will be eligible to take advantage of the change and leave the organisation within the next 12 months.

Therefore it is likely that quarters 3 & 4 will see similar numbers retiring to the above figures.

440 of the 735 officers who are or have retired have police service of between 25-29 years' service and therefore can be directly attributed to the pension changes.

The number of officers across each rank eligible to leave within the next 12 months from this quarter, if they chose to, is made up of the following ranks:

CS	Supt	Ch. Insp	Insp	Sgt	PC	Total
21	63	78	221	324	670	1377

As the above figures evidence, the recent changes to the Police Pensions Scheme has directly increased the number of retirements than we would normally expect to see.

While the loss of this number of officers, across all ranks, will undoubtedly present challenges for Police Scotland through the remainder of 2022 and 2023, at this time there is no impact to service delivery and the following measures will ensure we continue to maintain effective service delivery to the communities across Scotland:

Executive Leadership:

I will lead our response and will coordinate and communicate the up to date challenges and our response to mitigate those challenges across Police Scotland. I will also lead on recently developed critical vacancy escalation process to ensure critical posts are filled and will continue to prioritise posts within Local Policing and across our specialist functions.

Promotion:

The promotion calendar has been reviewed and the processes expedited in both time and efficiency, ensuring that the proper governance, transparency and quality of candidates are retained.

Promotion Parades Dates:

Normally promotion parades are held quarterly, however to expedite substantive promotions to ensure stability across promoted ranks, these will be conducted immediately after the promotion processes for all senior ranks. Junior rank promotion parades will also be held more frequently based on organisational need, not set dates.

Police Officer Recruitment:

Police Scotland will endeavour to recruit 300+ probationers per quarter. We will also maximise transferee opportunities from police forces across the United Kingdom.

Work Force Planning:

A review is ongoing on all non-critical, temporary ranks and secondments, to lessen the impact on front line resources. That review will look at police officers currently working within corporate services roles who could be redeployed into Local Policing.

Training and Specialist Resilience:

A review of resilience, capability and specialist availability is ongoing, as are the current on-call specialist cadre requirements. Once organisational training requirements are fully understood, a redesigned training schedule, to train and upskill will be devised.

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This will undoubtedly be a challenging period for Police Scotland, however I am assured that the mechanisms now implemented will meet those challenges head on and align to our Strategic Workforce Plan.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Page', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

David Page
Deputy Chief Officer