

Tom Winsor WS
Reviewer
Independent Review of Police Officers' & Staff
Remunerations & Conditions
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| Date | 29 October 2010 |

Dear Mr Winsor

REVIEW OF PAY AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND STAFF

As Chair of the Police Staff Council, as well as Chair of the Lancashire Police Authority, I should like to thank you for the opportunity to make responses to the work that you are undertaking to review the terms and conditions of Police Officers and Staff. For ease I have used the Headings that you suggested in your letter.

Entry Routes

Diversifying skills and experience

Lancashire Constabulary have seen a very positive response by broadening the range of routes to employment. Figures are becoming skewed at the moment because there has been no recruitment for over a year but in 2008, we achieved gender equality on entrants and we have also been seeking to become an employer of choice within the LGBT community with positive results from the Stonewall Survey on the Constabulary as a place to work. Our BME workforce is broadly reflective of the communities we serve and we are pleased that many people from BME communities join the constabulary at PCSO level.

We believe that there is a strong business case for diversity and that policing is more effective when it reflects the communities it serves. We would like to see Constabularies continuing to engage with minority communities and using innovative methods to engage with them. We would like to see this embedded through community engagement as part of the way that constabularies and communities work together and we believe that the increased use of social networking can play a valuable part in this process.

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We see the argument for graduate schemes but whilst recognising their value would also like to see other routes. We are happy to look at both local and national graduate schemes and in conjunction with the University of Central Lancashire have developed a foundation course to be combined with membership of the Special Constabulary. The course, essentially, provides the equivalent of the current Initial Police Learning and Development Programme. Students who successfully complete the foundation degree along with the training provided as members of the Special Constabulary will be considered for employment by Lancashire Constabulary subject to the successful completion of the national police selection process.

We believe that although there can be good argument for candidates to join above the rank of constable this may be particularly relevant at ACPO level and would wish to see this further considered.

Specials

We believe that there are opportunities to extend and develop the role of Special Constables and our foundation course has been successful at that. We think that there are advantages to prospective Constables working first as Specials. We have a relatively small drop out rate but it is clear that policing remains a difficult and demanding role and a period spent as a special can highlight whether this is the correct career choice. We are not sure that this volunteering route is appropriate for all areas. There are a number of roles which are analogous with other public sector work and we would like to see closer links with comparable sectors.

Deployment

General Deployment

At present not all forces make effective use of technology. We would like to see a much greater understanding of resource planning and the use of systems such as AVLS and APLS. We also recommend the use of different types of contract and the development of staff arrangements used as routine in other sectors such as bank and zero hours contracts.

All of the contractual changes are hampered by the current police regulations and the constitutional position of police constables.

Working Outside Core Hours

Current pay structure assumes all officers will work on a 24/7 demand basis – whilst in reality many officers work a more regular pattern of hours. Why are officers paid for inconvenient working hours when these are not occurring? Pay needs to reflect need for integrity of officers, but avoid overtly simplistic approaches which result in demands for higher pay

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Shifts

There is value in comparing police pay and conditions to those in other parts of the public sector; e.g. local government and health. Health can provide a comparison with other public sector workers in complex situations and in an emergency response environment. It is important to consider practices in other public sector areas such as 'self rostering' in the health service.

The aim should be to develop a more flexible work force with the emphasis/priority on providing the best service for citizens – not always what may be considered best for officers and staff.

Mutual Aid

Current pay and remuneration for working across forces / loan of officers to other forces is based on historical practice (from 1980s) and needs to be revisited and updated.

Business Interests

There are specific issues for Police Officers and Staff linked to their working environment. Forces should have clear policies on those areas where it is not felt appropriate for Officers and Staff to work in certain roles. There should be an impartial review process and some degree of local flexibility. Clearer understanding of issues around business appeals and the need to ensure that the overall pay and career structure offers sufficient opportunities to reduce need/want for officers to be involved in other work or businesses would be useful.

Performance/Post Related Pay

Incentivising High Performance

Incentive schemes should not just be linked to "productivity" – but should support improving public service, partnership working etc. Any incentives and enhancements need to be fair, clear and transparent to avoid undermining public confidence and trust in police.

It would also be useful to consider rewarding people for horizontal progression in order to ensure that specialism is seen as a career end in itself. Management progression is not appropriate for all staff and there is a need to value contributions in other ways

Recognising Skills and Hard to fill posts

There is evidence that some posts are hard to fill and this can be dealt with by applying market supplements – there has been no universal pay and grading review across the board in Policing as there has in other areas and it is clear that hard to fill posts change over time. Decisions made now should be the subject of future review to ensure that all increases remain necessary.

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Other Allowances and Entitlements

In reforming the pay structure ensure that there is a nationally agreed process for the transfer of skills, experience, length of service etc between forces. Current career structure is not as clearly defined as in other public sector areas with less opportunities (and encouragement?) to move between forces. This is particularly the case for police staff.

The Review must consider those areas where allowances are paid because of a historical entitlement rather than rewarding complexity or disruption. The so called "Spanish practices" need to be rooted out and removed.

Pay progression and Length of Service

Officer and Staff Pay Progression

There are some benefits to current progression arrangements but they do not fully reflect achievement and outcomes. PDR processes are cumbersome and do not reflect rewards for innovation and customer focus.

Length of Service

Particularly for police staff, it would be helpful to encourage movement between public sector organisations without loss of benefit. Current arrangements on length of service for officers mean that competent staff are lost too early. There may be merit for retaining retirement rates in their 50's for front line constables for whom agility is a key part, but there is limited rationale for applying this to senior officers whose primary function is to direct and manage operations and staff.

Exit Routes and Pensions

The Review should also consider the current employment position of Constables. There is precedent in Policing to have Constables which are also employees and this is worth examination. This situation exists within British Transport Police and Civil Nuclear Police

Redundancy

The current redundancy situation is not workable in a fast moving situation which requires flexibility. Police Authorities have been urged to look at workforce modernisation and a mix of skills but will be faced with a situation where the only group of people it can chose to make redundant are police staff. This could mean that cheaper more experienced civilian specialists are replaced with police officers who do these jobs less effectively at greater cost. Some of the key roles in policing – customer service, call handling, scientific support etc do not need to be carried out by warranted officers. The provisions of Regulation A19, are we believe, easily variable by the Secretary of State and need urgent consideration.

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Health Related Issues

Much of the key to this area is in robust management at a constabulary level. In Lancashire we have seen dramatic falls in both sickness levels and ill health retirement as active staff management has become part of the day to day work of all levels of management. We would welcome a review of regulations that support protecting officers injured or hurt on duty and believe that work being undertaken in the Armed Forces may have relevance here.

Pensions

Questions of re-engagement of officers and staff are directly linked to questions of retirement age. An officer in their fifties can be working alongside a police staff member carrying out broadly similar roles but is then able to retire, draw a pension and be re-engaged. This is an uncomfortable state of affairs. We would prefer to see sensible decisions made on retirement age than make comments based on what is "fair". It may make sound business sense to re-engage an experienced professional who needs little or no training to engage with and that they are familiar. If they are the best candidate for the job, they should have the chance of applying for it. Forces may chose to set rules about not employing people within a certain time of them receiving a pension.

Pay Machinery

Whilst most Authorities work to an agreed pay scale for officers and staff there is a need for a National pay Spine for all Authorities/Forces. There are currently three Authorities who negotiate on a local basis, plus the Met who operate on a Civil Service pay basis. This is not the most effective way of working and creates division.

The current pay and conditions negotiating process is cumbersome and slow and the cost of administering the pay structure is high. There is need for a radical approach to reforming the structure and process, making it more transparent and accountable to residents. It is acknowledged that this may conflict with interests of groups such as the Police Federation.

Conclusion

Many of the arrangements for remuneration for police officers and police staff are complex. They do not encourage flexibility and do not support the effective movement of people between roles, forces and public sector bodies.

I would very much support the view that looks at police staff in comparison with other public sector and professional staff rather than police officers. We would support fair and effective remuneration for officers but do feel that the arrangements that led to the creation of office holding constables have little relevance in a modern employment framework.

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In particular it is clear that that modern effective shift arrangements, bank staff and flexible hours contracts are a key set of tools for the employer who needs to consider how best to deliver 24/7 services in a time of reducing resources.

The National negotiating bodies should be retained but it is felt that they would benefit from significant simplification and improvement of the national roles. The tripartite arrangements need considerable re-balancing here, the role of the Home Office is out of kilter with its responsibilities and can lead to both extremely protracted negotiations together with an adverse effect on the ability of the employer's side to negotiate.

I should like thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on the review and I trust that these comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. T. Doherty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Malcolm T Doherty
CHAIRMAN