



Police
Remuneration Review Body

Police Remuneration Review Body

**Fifth Report
Northern Ireland 2019**

Chair: Anita Bharucha

Police Remuneration Review Body

Terms of reference¹

The Police Remuneration Review Body² (PRRB) provides independent recommendations to the Home Secretary and to the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice on the hours of duty, leave, pay, allowances and the issue, use and return of police clothing, personal equipment and accoutrements for police officers of or below the rank of chief superintendent and police cadets in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland respectively.

In reaching its recommendations the Review Body must have regard to the following considerations:

- the particular frontline role and nature of the office of constable;
- the prohibition on police officers being members of a trade union or withdrawing their labour;
- the need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified officers;
- the funds available to the Home Office, as set out in the Government's departmental expenditure limits, and the representations of police and crime commissioners and the Northern Ireland Policing Board in respect of local funding issues;
- the Government's wider public sector pay policy;
- the Government's policies for improving public services;
- the work of the College of Policing;
- the work of police and crime commissioners;
- relevant legal obligations on the police service in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, including anti-discrimination legislation regarding age, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief and disability;
- the operating environments of different forces, including consideration of the specific challenges of policing in rural or large metropolitan areas and in Northern Ireland, as well as any specific national roles which forces may have;
- any relevant legislative changes to employment law which do not automatically apply to police officers;
- that the remuneration of the remit group relates coherently to that of chief officer ranks.

The Review Body should also be required to consider other specific issues as directed by the Home Secretary and/or the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice, and

¹ The terms of reference were set by the Home Office following a public consultation – *Implementing a Police Pay Review Body – The Government's Response*, April 2013.

² The Police Remuneration Review Body was established by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, and became operational in September 2014.

should be required to take account of the economic and other evidence submitted by the Government, professional representatives and others.

It is also important for the Review Body to be mindful of developments in police officer pensions to ensure that there is a consistent, strategic and holistic approach to police pay and conditions.

Reports and recommendations of the Review Body should be submitted to the Home Secretary, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice (Northern Ireland), and they should be published.

Members³ of the Review Body

Anita Bharucha (Chair)
Elizabeth Bell
Andrew Bliss QPM
Professor Monojit Chatterji
Richard Childs QPM
Patrick McCartan CBE
Christopher Pilgrim
Trevor Reaney CBE

The secretariat is provided by the Office of Manpower Economics.

³ Members of the Review Body are appointed through open competition adhering to the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578090/Public_Appointments_Governance_Code_.pdf. [Accessed on 24 May 2019]

POLICE REMUNERATION REVIEW BODY

Fifth Report on Northern Ireland 2019

Executive Summary

Our 2019/20 recommendations (from 1 September 2019):

- **A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officer pay points for all ranks.**
- **An increase of 2.5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance.**
- **The current level of Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) does not increase and that the parties submit proposals next year on how CRTP can be incorporated into pay arrangements as part of the pay reform process in Northern Ireland, or a clear programme and timetable for phasing out CRTP.**
- **Dog Handlers' Allowance should increase by 2.5%.**

Introduction

1. The Vision for the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) states:
“We want to help build a safe, confident and peaceful Northern Ireland. We will prevent crime, detect offenders and protect the most vulnerable in society”⁴. The PSNI has a workforce of around 8,900⁵ on a full-time equivalent basis, of whom nearly 6,700 are police officers. Our terms of reference relate only to the pay and certain other conditions of service of PSNI police officers, and not to police staff or other groups.
2. Demand on PSNI officers has increased and become more complex in recent years and the security threat remains ‘SEVERE’, with terrorist activity continuing to place police officers at risk of attack. Moreover, at the time of writing, PSNI officers are operating in the absence of a fully-functioning Northern Ireland Assembly and in an atmosphere of uncertainty about future pressures on Northern Ireland policing.

⁴ PSNI, *Our Strategy and Vision*. Available at: <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/our-strategy-and-vision/> [Accessed on 24 May 2019]

⁵ PSNI (April 2019), *Strength of Police Service Statistics*. Available at: <https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/strength-of-police-service-statistics/>. [Accessed on 24 May 2019]

3. The policing environment is demanding and challenging. Police officers at all ranks undertake important, difficult, complex and sometimes dangerous work. During the course of this review, we have been struck by officers' sense of vocation and public service. It is right that police officers should be held in esteem by those they serve.

Our remit

4. Our Fifth Report contains our recommendations for 2019/20 for police officer pay and allowances for all police ranks in Northern Ireland. The remit letter from the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department of Justice asked for recommendations on:
 - the application of any pay award for 2019/20 for police officers of all ranks, including chief officers;
 - whether any increase should be applied to the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) and other allowances, including those for on-call and dog handlers;
 - any changes which should be applied to the existing Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) in light of the review currently being concluded by the PSNI;
 - whether the superintending ranks should have access to targeted payments or bonuses; and
 - consideration of any specific challenges for the PSNI highlighted in written evidence from Northern Ireland parties, particularly in terms of targeting pay awards to address recruitment and retention pressures.

Our analysis of the 2019/20 evidence

5. The main points which we noted from the evidence are:
 - *Policing environment* – The Northern Ireland security situation remains 'SEVERE' with ongoing terrorist activity continuing to place police officers at risk of attack. The overall level of demand on the PSNI remains high and the rise in unplanned overtime is a cause for concern. (Paragraphs 2.25 to 2.27)

- *Sickness levels* – We were particularly concerned to learn that the very high levels of sickness absence reported to us last year had increased. (Paragraph 2.106)
- *Pay parity* – All the Northern Ireland parties continue to recognise that the core role of police officers remains common to all police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and view pay parity as necessary. We agree that the core role of police officers remains consistent across all the police forces in our remit, and accept this rationale for retaining pay parity. However, pay and workforce reforms in England and Wales and the significant differences between those forces and the PSNI could undermine pay parity in future. (Paragraphs 2.42 and 2.43)
- *Public sector pay policies and affordability* – The lack of a public sector pay policy for Northern Ireland continues to hamper our considerations. Also, policing in Northern Ireland has come under considerable financial pressure in recent years, leading to significant reductions in the size of the PSNI workforce and the adoption of many cost-saving measures in other areas. While the PSNI received additional short-term funding in 2019/20 to prepare for EU Exit, it also faced new and emerging budgetary pressures. Furthermore, the short-term nature of significant sources of PSNI funding make it harder to evaluate its true affordability position each year. (Paragraphs 2.54 and 2.55)
- *Economy and labour market* – While inflation had fallen back from a peak of 3.1% in November 2017 to 2.1% in the year to December 2018, the employment rate has continued to grow with average weekly earnings growth at 3.4% and median pay settlements 2.5% in the three months to January 2019 which is similar to the position in 2018. (Paragraphs 2.61 and 2.62)
- *Earnings* – Police officer median earnings in Northern Ireland decreased by 2.5% in 2017/18. The pay lead of PSNI officers relative to their England and Wales counterparts was 14% compared with 19% last year. This pay lead is primarily due to the NITA, higher overtime earnings, and the retention of the CRTP scheme. (Paragraph 2.75)

- *PSNI workforce, recruitment and retention* – The long-term decline in the number of police officers is a concerning element of the Northern Ireland policing environment and evidence from the parties indicates that current workforce levels are insufficient to meet demand. Consequently, officers are expected to manage an increasing level of responsibility and workload. In addition, there was concern that additional time-limited funding to cover the provision of around 300 officers for EU Exit would not allow the PSNI to do more than maintain current levels of service. (Paragraphs 2.91 to 2.93)
- *Morale and motivation* – From the 2018 Police Federation for Northern Ireland workforce survey, we were particularly struck by the increase in dissatisfaction with pay and the negative impact on morale of the delay in pay awards. We also note the evidence on the effects on officers of increasing demand, workload and responsibility and reducing budgets and workforce. We concluded that productivity within the police depends to a considerable extent on discretionary effort and goodwill. (Paragraph 2.106 to 2.109)

Pay proposals and recommendations for 2019/20

6. The key factors we took into account in reaching our main pay uplift recommendation were:
- the desire of all the parties for continued pay parity with England and Wales;
 - the evidence we received of increasing complexity and demand on the police, including the impact of displaced demand;
 - increased productivity in terms of service improvements achieved despite falling officer numbers;
 - the nature of police work, which is important, difficult, complex and sometimes dangerous;
 - that police productivity depends to a considerable extent on goodwill and discretionary effort which requires officers to be suitably motivated;
 - the state of police morale, with officers concerned about their work-life balance and workload and responsibility;
 - the evidence provided on affordability; and

- the state of the wider economy, including the level of pay settlements and the cost of living.
7. Taking these factors together, **we recommend a consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officer pay points for all ranks from 1 September 2019.** (Paragraphs 3.6 to 3.17)
 8. We again recommend that the **NITA** is increased in line with the annual pay award. **We therefore recommend a 2.5% increase from 1 September 2019.** (Paragraphs 3.25 and 3.26)
 9. We note the tension between retaining CRTP and the rationale for pay parity. **We therefore recommend that the current level of CRTP does not increase and that the parties submit proposals next year on how CRTP can be incorporated into pay arrangements as part of the pay reform process in Northern Ireland, or a clear programme and timetable for phasing out CRTP.** (Paragraph 3.35)
 10. **We also recommend that the Dog Handlers' Allowance is increased by 2.5% from 1 September 2019** in line with the annual pay award. (Paragraph 3.48)

Targeted payments

11. The remit letter for this round asked us to make a recommendation on whether the superintending ranks in Northern Ireland should have access to targeted payments or bonuses. However, as the idea is at an early stage of development in Northern Ireland and as there was low take-up of such payments in England and Wales this year, we consider that reform of base pay may be a more effective way to reward superintendents fairly for their contribution.
12. We were also asked to make a recommendation on the targeting of pay awards to address recruitment and retention pressures. However, our view is that a careful approach needs to be taken to the introduction of such payments and we ask the parties to keep the matter under review, particularly in the context of future pay reform developments. (Paragraphs 3.43 to 3.45)

Forward Look

13. We hope that PSNI police officers are able to receive their pay award on time in 2019/20, although we recognise the ongoing political situation in Northern Ireland at the time of writing. If police officers are to receive a pay award on the normal timescale, a decision on their pay will need to be made by 31 August at the very latest. We also hope that publication of our report will not be subject to delay. (Paragraph 4.10)

Anita Bharucha (Chair)
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Patrick McCartan
Christopher Pilgrim
Trevor Reaney

29 May 2019

