



Police  
Remuneration Review Body

# **Police Remuneration Review Body**

**Ninth Report on Northern Ireland 2023**

***Chair:* Zoë Billingham CBE**





# Police Remuneration Review Body

Ninth Report for Northern Ireland 2023

*Chair:* Zoë Billingham CBE

Presented to the Permanent Secretary, Department of Justice for  
Northern Ireland

20 June 2023

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# Police Remuneration Review Body

## Terms of reference<sup>1</sup>

The Police Remuneration Review Body<sup>2</sup> (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 should be required to take account of the economic and other evidence submitted by the Government, professional representatives and others.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

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.

### **Members<sup>3</sup> of the Review Body**

Zoë Billingham CBE (Chair)  
Andrew Bliss QPM  
Professor Monojit Chatterji  
Richard Childs QPM  
Kathryn Gray  
Mark Hoble JP  
Patrick McCartan CBE  
Trevor Reaney CBE

The secretariat is provided by the OME.

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<sup>3</sup> Members of the Review Body are appointed through an 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578090/Public_Appointments_Governance_Code_.pdf). [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

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## List of abbreviations

ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPI	Consumer Prices Index
CPIH	Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs
CPOSA	Chief Police Officers' Staff Association
CRTP	Competence Related Threshold Payment
DCI	Detective Chief Inspector
DEL	Departmental Expenditure Limit
DOJ	Department of Justice
EU	European Union
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FYE	Financial Year Ending
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDR	Incomes Data Research
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NDNA	New Decade, New Approach
NHS	National Health Service
NIFC	Northern Ireland Fiscal Council
NIPB	Northern Ireland Policing Board
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
NITA	Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PCDA	Police Constable Degree Apprentice
PCF	Police Consultative Forum
PFNI	Police Federation for Northern Ireland
PPS	Pay Progression Standard
PRRB	Police Remuneration Review Body
PSA	Police Superintendents' Association
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
RPI	Retail Prices Index
RTI	Real Time Information
SANI	Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland
UK	United Kingdom



## Foreword

This is our Ninth Report to the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland. The Permanent Secretary's remit letter of 3 February 2023 asked us to commence our annual review of the pay for Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) officers in conjunction with that for police officers in England and Wales for 2023/24.

We were shocked and saddened by the terrorist attack on DCI John Caldwell and the threat made against the families of police officers. These events underlined for us the dangers faced by PSNI officers, and their civilian colleagues. We also note the increase in the terrorism threat level to 'SEVERE' at a time when the PSNI is experiencing greater demand from a wide range of other factors.

We note the Chief Constable's comment about the potential impact of the 'precarious' funding situation on effective policing and the fears expressed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) that the police service is now at breaking point. We are deeply concerned at the possible impact of the PSNI's funding position on its vital neighbourhood policing function and the risk of it becoming a reactive and less diverse service, with a reduced ability to prevent crime and protect the public. Recruitment has been paused again and there are reports of increased resignations by new entrants. The long wait for the first pay increment must be shortened.

We also note the stark contrast between funding levels for the PSNI and the recent investment in officer recruitment in England and Wales. For the PSNI to both maintain its vital services and observe the parity principle, a fully funded pay award is required, with no adverse impact on officer or staff numbers or police services.

The current security environment and the political situation in Northern Ireland formed a backdrop to our deliberations. We appreciated the parties' participation in the evidence-gathering process but regret that, while the PFNI submitted written evidence, it declined an oral evidence session. We hope that the PFNI will participate fully next year.

The principle of parity on pay and allowances with England and Wales, which we continue to uphold at the request of all the Northern Ireland policing parties, is fundamental to our recommendations again this year. We define parity as meaning the same pay scales and allowances across the police service in England, Wales

and Northern Ireland to reflect the fact that the role of the police officer is fundamentally the same across all three areas, while also recognising the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions.

In reaching our pay recommendation for 2023/24, we have taken into account a range of factors in addition to the principle of pay parity. In particular, these include: the continuing impact on officers of the high cost of living, with Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation at 8.7% and food inflation 19.3% at the time of submission; median earnings in Northern Ireland growing by 6.6% in April 2023 compared with a year earlier; and our analysis of recruitment, retention, motivation and morale in the PSNI. In the parity context, annual growth in Average Weekly Earnings in Great Britain was, excluding bonuses, 6.7% in the whole economy and 7.0% in the private sector in the three months to March 2023. In addition, the industrial action across the public sector and revised pay settlements being offered to other public sector workforces led us to give particular weight this year to the inability of police officers to take similar action.

Given these factors, and considering all our Terms of Reference, we conclude that an annual pay uplift of 7% for all officers up to and including the rank of assistant chief constable reflects our obligation to deliver a fair and just pay award. We recommend that the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) be uplifted by the same amount. In addition, we are recommending the abolition of pay point 0 of the constable scale and that all constables move to pay point 2 after twelve months at pay point 1, as in England and Wales. To recognise the growing responsibilities of the superintending ranks, we are recommending an adjustment to pay point three of the chief superintendent pay scale to be implemented over two years. We also set out our response to the findings of the chief police officer remuneration review conducted in England and Wales and the implications of that for chief officers in Northern Ireland and for their 2023 pay award. In line with England and Wales, we are recommending from 1 September 2023 an increase of 5% to the PSNI chief constable pay point and a 6.4% increase to the PSNI deputy chief constable pay point, to set it at 82.5% of the chief constable pay point.

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*20 June 2023*





# **POLICE REMUNERATION REVIEW BODY**

## **Northern Ireland Ninth Report 2023**

### **Executive Summary**

**Our 2023/24 recommendations (from 1 September 2023):**

**Pay:**

- 1. A consolidated increase of 7% to all police officer pay points for all ranks up to and including assistant chief constable.**
- 2. The introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time.**
- 3. The removal of pay point 0 of the constable pay scale.**
- 4. All constables to move to pay point 2 after twelve months at pay point 1, as in England and Wales.**
- 5. Point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale to be uplifted by £2,838 from 1 September 2023 and £2,837 from 1 September 2024. These uplifts are to be made before the application of the respective pay awards for these years.**

**In line with recommendations on chief constable and deputy chief constable pay in the PRRB England and Wales Ninth Report:**

- 6. A consolidated increase of 5% to the PSNI chief constable pay point from 1 September 2023.**
- 7. A consolidated increase of 6.4% to the PSNI deputy chief constable pay point from 1 September 2023 to set it at 82.5% of the chief constable pay point.**

**Allowances:**

- 8. An increase of 7% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) from 1 September 2023.**
- 9. Dog Handlers' Allowance to be uprated by 7%.**
- 10. That the current level of the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) does not increase and that, by 30 November 2023, the DOJ submits a full proposal with a firm timeline for the removal of CRTP and convergence with allowances in England and Wales, in the context of parity.**

1. We received our remit letter from the Department of Justice on 3 February 2023 asking us to make recommendations on how to apply the pay award for 2023/24 for police officers in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).
2. Policing is a challenging profession. Officers are daily required to deal with difficult, dangerous and complex issues, often at a risk to their personal safety. In Northern Ireland, a number of issues have coalesced to place great

pressures on police officers, such as the increase in the terrorist threat level to 'SEVERE' in March 2023. The total number of assaults on PSNI officers has increased, while the level of demand placed on them is described as unprecedented. Crime levels are standing at a 12-year high, in part because of increases in fraud and cybercrime driven by technological change.

3. Central to our report is the principle of parity on pay and allowances with England and Wales, which we continue to uphold at the request of all the Northern Ireland policing parties. We define parity as meaning the same pay scales and allowances across the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect the fact that the role of the police officer is fundamentally the same across all three areas, while also recognising the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions.
4. The PSNI is facing severe financial pressures arising from the overall Northern Ireland budgetary situation in 2023/24. Without significant budgetary investment in the year ahead, the PSNI faces becoming smaller and less visible, accessible and responsive. There is a strong risk of its financial situation undermining its recruitment plans, officer resilience, demographic representativeness, neighbourhood policing function and overall operational effectiveness.
5. Our report has been completed during a period of significant economic uncertainty. In Chapter 2, we consider government pay policy and the performance of the wider economy and labour market before examining indicators on changes in the policing workforce and environment in Northern Ireland and PSNI officer recruitment, retention, motivation and morale. Economically, this has been a challenging year, and the chapter sets out changes to inflation since we made our pay award recommendation for 2022/23. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rate of inflation peaked at 11.1% in the year to October 2022, and was 8.7% in the year to April 2023. The largest upward contributions to the annual rate of inflation in April 2023 came from energy prices and food. Mortgage rates for many have also increased sharply. In April 2023, median earnings in Northern Ireland increased by 6.6%

compared with a year earlier. In addition, we note that the Northern Ireland public sector pay policy for 2023/24 stipulates that awards must be affordable in the context of each department's budget settlement as set out in the 2023/24 Northern Ireland Budget.

6. Assessing the affordability of pay rise recommendations in this context is very challenging, given the extensive budget pressures on the PSNI and plans already in train to reduce officer numbers in Northern Ireland. While we are cognisant of the extremely difficult situation that the PSNI faces, we would not properly discharge our remit if we were to base our recommendations on pre-determined budgetary considerations alone, rather than the needs of the police service, especially given continuing economic uncertainty and cost-of-living pressures.
7. We observe that high morale and strong motivation drive productivity. We also acknowledge the damage caused to officers' morale again this year by the delay in the payment of the annual pay award and salary increments. We therefore recommend the introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time. This accords with the principle of parity with England and Wales.
8. In Chapter 3 of our report, we summarise the issues that we took into account in making our recommendation for a basic pay award for the police officers in 2023/24 and for changes to police allowances. As requested by all the Northern Ireland parties, we have focused first and foremost on upholding the principle of parity with England and Wales on pay and allowances, while also noting that the affordability of the implications of the parity principle poses far greater budgetary challenges for the PSNI than for police forces in England and Wales. We also consider the performance of the economy and the challenges posed by inflation which we highlight above. In addition, we reiterate the concerns set out in our 2022 report of the impact on the lowest paid police officers of the substantial increase in the cost of living and ongoing economic volatility.

9. Police officers are prohibited from taking industrial action. We consider the implications for their morale of the pay settlements offered by the Government to parts of the public sector following strike action. We agree with policing parties that say that we and government collectively have a strong moral obligation to deliver a fair and just pay award because police officers do not have the right to strike.
10. We acknowledge the affordability position in Northern Ireland, the impact of the overall Northern Ireland budgetary situation on the PSNI in 2023/24, and its expected funding shortfall. However, at the request of all the parties, we have given priority to pay parity. The PSNI told us that it had provisionally budgeted for a 5% average pay increase in 2023/24, while all parties sought pay parity with England and Wales police officers in 2023/24. In addition, the PSNI, Police Federation for Northern Ireland, Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland and Chief Police Officers' Staff Association sought a pay award that would reflect inflation. Looking across Government as a whole, we observe that there is inevitably flexibility in all funding arrangements.
11. After taking the above factors into account including the principle of parity, the economic and budgetary situation, developments in public and private sector pay, the prohibition on industrial action, our analysis of recruitment, retention, motivation and morale, and acknowledging the budgetary position in Northern Ireland, we conclude that a pay uplift of 7% across all ranks up to and including assistant chief constable is the most suitable approach. We appreciate that this is a substantial increase but, in recognition of our obligation to deliver a fair and just pay award and because police officers do not have the right to strike, we judge that it is justified. We set out that the 2023 pay award should be fully funded. We also recommend a 7% increase in the NITA.
12. Furthermore, we welcome the Chief Constable exercising his discretion to raise the PSNI starting salary to pay point 1 from 1 April 2023. This accords with our recommendation across England and Wales and Northern Ireland this year for the complete removal of the bottom pay point from the constable pay scale, a move that will raise starting salaries to £28,551 after the 2023

pay award has been applied. We also recommend that the first pay increment for new PSNI officers is brought forward to the twelve-month point. This would assist with both recruitment and retention and uphold the principle of parity on pay and allowances.

13. In addition, to reflect a significant expansion of the role of chief superintendents, we recommend an adjustment to pay point 3 of their pay scale to be implemented over two years. Furthermore, as part of a realignment and simplification of the pay arrangements for the two most senior ranks in policing in England and Wales and Northern Ireland, we recommend from 1 September 2023 consolidated increases of 5% to the PSNI chief constable pay point and 6.4% to the PSNI deputy chief constable pay point.
14. Finally, in our Forward Look (Chapter 4) we set out the issues of particular interest to us in future pay rounds. A key issue will be understanding the impact of the Northern Ireland political, budgetary and economic context on the PSNI and its officers, especially those in the federated ranks.



# **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

## **Introduction**

- 1.1 This is our Ninth Report on police officer remuneration in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). For the sixth successive year, chief police officers were added to our standing remit of the federated and superintending ranks. As a result, this report includes recommendations for police officers of all ranks in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 Our approach to our work this year took account of the unresolved political situation in Northern Ireland and the current security environment, both of which formed a backdrop to our deliberations. We are grateful to all the parties involved for the flexibility and pragmatism they have shown in helping us to complete this report in accordance with the desired timetable.

## **Our Eighth Report 2022**

- 1.3 Our Eighth Report was submitted to the Minister of Justice for Northern Ireland on 29 June 2022 (Appendix A). It contained the following recommendations on Northern Ireland police officer pay and allowances:
- A consolidated increase of £1,900 to all police officer pay points for all ranks.
  - An increase of 5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA).
  - An increase of 5% in the Dog Handlers' Allowance.
  - That the current level of the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) does not increase and that in evidence next year the parties present a clear process and timetable for its abolition.
  - That the payment of officers providing mutual aid is brought in line with England and Wales, including the Away from Home Overnight Allowance.
- 1.4 On 3 February 2023, in the absence of a Minister of Justice, the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Justice (DOJ) responded to the recommendations by confirming that the requisite approvals had concluded for the Police Remuneration Review Body's (PRRB's) recommendations on

the pay award, the NITA and the Dog Handlers' Allowance in 2022/23. He also advised us that our Northern Ireland report could be published.

- 1.5 We were disappointed that in 2022/23 the implementation of our recommendations was again delayed. We were also concerned that for the second successive year there were severe delays in the payment of annual increments to police officers in Northern Ireland.

### **2023/24 remit**

- 1.6 In his letter of 3 February 2023, the Permanent Secretary asked us to commence our annual review of PSNI officers in conjunction with that for police officers in England and Wales. He also asked us to consider the regular elements of the NITA and the Dog Handlers' Allowance.
- 1.7 In addition, the Permanent Secretary invited us to have regard to our standing terms of reference.

### **Our approach to the 2023 round**

- 1.8 We have reached recommendations and made observations this year following our close examination of evidence from a range of sources. These include: the written and oral evidence submissions from the parties; the remit letter from the Department of Justice; our analyses of police workforce and pay statistics; the economic and labour market context; and external independent reports on the pressures on public sector finances in Northern Ireland. The principle of parity on pay and allowances with England and Wales also strongly guided our work.

### **The principle of parity on pay and allowances**

- 1.9 We uphold the principle of parity on pay and allowances with England and Wales. We define parity as meaning the same pay scales and allowances across the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect the fact that the role of police officer is fundamentally the same across all three areas, while also recognising the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions. This means that the NITA, which is unique to Northern Ireland, is the one allowance excluded from the parity principle. On all other allowances, the PSNI should plan for

convergence with England and Wales. We provide this explanation here because the issue of parity arises several times in our report.

- 1.10 During the round we considered the Northern Ireland evidence alongside that from England and Wales. This highlighted to us the striking contrast between the Northern Ireland public sector affordability context and that in England and Wales, but also the different operational context and challenges facing the PSNI compared with forces in England and Wales. The evidence underscored for us that the affordability of the implications of the parity principle on pay and allowances poses far greater challenges in the Northern Ireland situation than in England and Wales.

### *Our visit*

- 1.11 We visited PSNI officers in Belfast on 1 February 2023. We are very grateful to all those who spoke to us. The key themes arising were:
- All police officers were awaiting the 2022/23 pay award outcome and contractual increments owed<sup>4</sup>.
  - Those expressing opinions on the pay award for 2023/24 tended to say that it needed to match inflation.
  - Expected budget cuts would reduce police officer numbers to their lowest ever level in the PSNI (a reduction of 800 over three years was predicted). Civilian staff numbers were being cut too. This placed increased pressure on the remaining workforce.
  - The constable pay scale started too low and needed a more even gradient of increments.
  - A cost-of-living survey had been conducted by the PSNI revealing foodbanks installed in police stations for officers' use.
  - Information on constable salaries and outgoings showed that deductions from pay and the cost of fuel to get to work and back were a great financial burden; some officers were resorting to family assistance and savings to get to work or pay rent.

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<sup>4</sup> The PSNI confirmed that these were paid to the federated and superintending ranks at the end of February 2023 and to chief police officers at the end of April.

- There was damaging uncertainty over the value of the NITA and whether it would be reduced along with the terrorist threat rating. Some officers were said to rely on the NITA to get by.
- Despite the downgrading of the terrorist threat to 'SUBSTANTIAL'<sup>5</sup> (before its subsequent reversion to 'SEVERE' on 28 March 2023), the work of the PSNI was operationally no different: an attack was still likely and it remained necessary to check under cars every morning. Officers were still armed for personal protection.
- Serious and organised crime organisations were reportedly becoming more prevalent.
- There had been a recent spike in the number of police officer resignations, not just retirements.
- The number of officers taking second jobs had increased, including for example to work as delivery drivers on their days off. This could affect their ability to perform effectively as police officers and increased levels of personal risk.
- There was a high rate of attacks on officers. Only the previous day in a mental health incident an officer had been knifed in the neck and another in the face. More than 40 attacks on officers had occurred in the previous seven days.

### *Written evidence*

1.12 We received written evidence in March 2023 from the parties listed below.

Summaries of the key points from each party's evidence can be found in Appendix C. Links to the parties' websites are provided in Annex D.

- The Department of Justice and Department of Finance;
- The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB);
- The PSNI;
- The Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI);
- The Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland (SANI); and
- The Chief Police Officers' Staff Association (CPOSA).

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<sup>5</sup> The visit took place when the Northern Ireland security rating was 'SUBSTANTIAL' (22 March 2022 to 27 March 2023).

- 1.13 We held oral evidence sessions in Belfast with five of the parties in April 2023. We are grateful to the PFNI for submitting written evidence this year but regret that it did not participate in an oral evidence session. The PFNI told us that it would not participate in any oral evidence due to ongoing concerns with the pay review process. We strongly hope that the PFNI will participate fully in the next PRRB round.

### **Environment for our considerations**

- 1.14 This is our second report completed during a period of significant political instability and economic uncertainty in Northern Ireland following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The work of police officers is important, difficult, complex and often dangerous and we would particularly like to acknowledge our remit group for their contribution this year. We observe that the security level in Northern Ireland was increased to 'SEVERE' on 28 March 2023 and recognise the impact of terrorism in Northern Ireland on police officers and their families, as well as on PSNI civilian staff members.
- 1.15 Chapter 2 provides a summary of the main evidence from the parties, sets out this year's overall policing context and provides our analysis of the issues. Chapter 3 contains our recommendations on the pay and allowances of police officers in Northern Ireland, as required by the remit letter. Chapter 4 looks ahead to the issues that we expect to inform our work next year.



## Chapter 2 – Our Analysis of the 2023/24 Evidence

### Introduction

- 2.1 In this chapter we analyse the key points in the evidence from the Northern Ireland parties as it relates to our standing terms of reference and to our remit letter from the DOJ in Northern Ireland. More detailed summaries of each party's evidence can be found in Appendix C. Our conclusions from the analysis in this chapter are carried forward to our consideration of pay proposals in Chapter 3 and our Forward Look in Chapter 4.

### Northern Ireland policing environment

#### *Demand on policing*

- 2.2 Policing is facing strategic challenges, for example from technological change driving an increase in fraud and cybercrime, the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic with implications for public order and safety and an increase in mental health incidents. In his report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) in May 2023, the PSNI Chief Constable described the total level of demand on policing in Northern Ireland as 'unprecedented'<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.3 The DOJ told us in oral evidence that a number of issues had coalesced to place great pressures on police officers in Northern Ireland, including the increasing threat from terrorism. On 28 March 2023, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced that the terrorism threat level in Northern Ireland had been raised from 'SUBSTANTIAL' to 'SEVERE', meaning that a terrorist attack was now highly likely (instead of likely).
- 2.4 In addition, the PSNI reported an overall 5% increase in crime in Northern Ireland in 2023 on the previous year and the NIPB said that the crime level in the last 12 months was at its highest for 12 years. We learned on our visit in February 2023 that levels of paramilitary activity and serious and organised crime activity had risen. In written evidence, the PSNI advised us that it faced a range of unique challenges arising from factors such as political instability,

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<sup>6</sup> The PSNI Chief Constable's report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, 4 May 2023. Available at: <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/publication/chief-constables-report-northern-ireland-policing-board-37> [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

the increased cost of living and strike action by other workforces.

Furthermore, levels of domestic violence and sexual offences had grown. All these elements had intensified Northern Ireland-specific levels of threat, risk and harm to its police officers.

- 2.5 The NIPB told us that public services were facing financial challenges in Northern Ireland and that the rise in the cost of living was hitting many families. It said that, as a consequence, police officers increasingly found themselves dealing with situations they were not professionally trained for, such as vulnerable people requiring medical intervention and people with addiction issues. The PSNI estimated that more than a third of demand placed on its services had a link to mental health issues. Furthermore, the DOJ advised us that the PSNI was being affected by delays in the Northern Ireland courts system. These meant that rehabilitation work could not begin and reoffending levels were not reducing.

#### *Our comment on the Northern Ireland policing environment*

- 2.6 We were struck by the parties' descriptions to us of the increased pressures being placed on the PSNI, especially the Chief Constable's report that the level of demand being faced in Northern Ireland is unprecedented. In particular, we note the impact on the service from the increase in the terrorism threat level to 'SEVERE' at a time when the PSNI is experiencing greater demand and resource pressures from a wide range of other factors. These factors illustrate the increasingly challenging context of policing in Northern Ireland and the pressures facing officers and the service as a whole.

### **Public sector pay policies and affordability**

#### *Northern Ireland public sector pay policy*

- 2.7 The Northern Ireland public sector pay policy for 2023/24 was published by the Department of Finance for Northern Ireland on 31 May 2023. It stipulated that awards had to be affordable in the context of each department's budget settlement as set out in the 2023/24 Northern Ireland Budget. It said this was so that essential public services and public sector employment could be funded sustainably.

- 2.8 The DOJ told us that, in the context of the Northern Ireland public sector pay policy and following receipt of our report, it would consider whether any pay award could be progressed for 2023/24.

#### *HM Treasury public sector pay policy*

- 2.9 HM Treasury told us that pay awards this year should find a careful balance between recognising the vital importance of public sector workers, while delivering value for the taxpayer, not increasing the country's debt further, and supporting the government's macroeconomic framework. It said that it was important that pay awards did not exacerbate inflationary pressures, and that they had to be funded from existing budgets.

#### *The Department of Justice budget for 2023/24*

- 2.10 The DOJ told us that, under the Northern Ireland Budget announced on 27 April 2023<sup>7</sup>, its 2023/24 budget represented a reduction of 1.7% on its final budget in 2022/23. It explained that this would leave it with a funding shortfall of around £148 million, so constraining its ability to take forward 'desperately needed' criminal justice system reforms. The NIPB, PSNI and Departments of Justice and Finance drew our attention to a report by the Northern Ireland Fiscal Council (NIFC)<sup>8</sup> on the Northern Ireland Budget for the preceding financial year. This showed that in 2022/23 the DOJ was the only major department to have experienced a cut in funding allocation and that it was 23.9% worse off in real terms since 2019/20 compared to its Whitehall counterpart. The DOJ added that its 2022/23 budget had resulted in cost-cutting actions, such as the Chief Constable's decision to pause police officer recruitment in March 2022. The parties contrasted the position of the Department of Justice with the £2 billion increase in spending in England and Wales on the Police Uplift Programme to grow officer numbers by 20,000.

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<sup>7</sup> The Budget also provided a ring-fenced Resource DEL budget of £93,032 (up from £83,772) in 2022/23 and a Capital DEL budget of £128,746 (up from £77,959). This excluded separate HM Treasury funding for additional security and the Northern Ireland Protocol.

<sup>8</sup> Northern Ireland Fiscal Council (March 2023), *The NIO's 2022-23 Budget for Northern Ireland: an assessment*. Available at: [https://www.nifiscalcouncil.org/files/nifiscalcouncil/documents/2023-03/The%20NIO%27s%202022-23%20Budget%20for%20Northern%20Ireland%20-%20web%20version%2028.03.23\\_0.pdf](https://www.nifiscalcouncil.org/files/nifiscalcouncil/documents/2023-03/The%20NIO%27s%202022-23%20Budget%20for%20Northern%20Ireland%20-%20web%20version%2028.03.23_0.pdf) [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

### *The PSNI budget 2023/24*

- 2.11 The DOJ told us that the PSNI budget typically represented nearly 70% of the Department's overall resource budget. Furthermore, the proportion of PSNI funding that was pay-related was almost 80%. The DOJ told us that the PSNI faced significant pressures in 2023/24.
- 2.12 The PSNI advised us that its formal budget allocation for 2023/24 received from the DOJ in May 2023 represented a budget cut of 1.7% on the previous financial year. It said that this reduction, combined with rising costs and pay requirements, created a substantial funding gap of £107 million against its overall requirement. It told us that in anticipation of a tough budgetary settlement it had already paused recruitment from June 2023, curtailed spending and reduced other costs. It added that even with those actions, it still faced a remaining gap of £44 million in 2023/24. The PSNI reported that it had been asked to take steps to live within this budget and assume no further funding.
- 2.13 The PSNI said that the number of police officers would reduce by March 2024 because of a combination of the finalised 2023/24 budget and natural attrition. At the time of submitting our report, the PSNI told us that the size of the decrease in establishment was uncertain but that it was under continuous evaluation and subject to change. The DOJ had told us in oral evidence that if the funding gap was confirmed and officer numbers were reduced further, there was a risk of Northern Ireland becoming an unsafe environment.
- 2.14 On our visit to the PSNI in February 2023, the Chief Constable had stressed to us his concerns at the dilemma he faced in trying to balance the requirements of Section 32<sup>9</sup> of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 with his obligations as the Accounting Officer for the PSNI budget. In his subsequent monthly report to the NIPB in May 2023, the Chief Constable described the PSNI's financial position as 'precarious' and said that an already stark situation for the year ahead had the potential to become an impossible one.

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<sup>9</sup> Section 32 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 sets out the general functions of the police as: (a) to protect life and property; (b) to preserve order; (c) to prevent the commission of offences; (d) where an offence has been committed, to take measures to bring the offender to justice.

He expressed grave concerns about the level of threat, risk and harm that would consequently face communities.

- 2.15 Following receipt of the confirmed PSNI budget allocation for 2023/24 in May 2023, the Chief Constable updated the NIPB in June. The Chief Constable repeated his description of the gap between the PSNI's resource requirement and budget as 'stark' and about the tension between his statutory duties and his responsibilities as an Accounting Officer. He also explained that, in a 90-day review process, the service would identify cost-cutting and efficiency proposals. Measures being evaluated by the PSNI for immediate implementation included: pausing recruitment; tight control of future internal promotion and selection; and a reduction in overtime. In addition, reductions in response and neighbourhood policing and the demand from third parties such as the health service were under consideration as ways to reshape the PSNI operating model to reflect a shrinking budget. The Chief Constable emphasised that, despite the budgetary situation, the PSNI had resolved not to withdraw from communities but instead try to preserve the gains in legitimacy and public trust that its neighbourhood policing function had secured there. However, he added that a smaller policing footprint was likely<sup>10</sup>.
- 2.16 The PSNI told us that in its financial planning it had factored in an assumed 5% pay uplift cost for 2023/24. It explained that this position was unchanged following confirmation of its 2023/24 budget.
- 2.17 The NIPB and the PFNI said that the PSNI's budgetary position had placed the service 'at breaking point' and had forced it to prioritise responding to emergencies over other functions such as neighbourhood policing. The parties expressed concern that the PSNI's financial position would make it become a reactive police service rather than one with a community ethos. The PFNI said that without significant budgetary investment in the year ahead, the

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<sup>10</sup> The PSNI Chief Constable's report to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, 1 June 2023. Available at: <https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/publication/chief-constables-report-northern-ireland-policing-board-38> [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

PSNI would face stark choices on the allocation of remaining resources and become smaller and less visible, accessible and responsive.

- 2.18 The NIPB said that neighbourhood and community policing would definitely be at risk in the next 12 months because of the funding situation. This had left the NIPB hugely worried about the impact on the service, its connection with the community and its ability to prevent crime and reduce demand. It said it was vital for the police to invest in the community relationship and be present on a regular basis. If engagement was lessened, it would take years to reinstate it. The DOJ confirmed that, with fewer officers, those remaining would have to work more overtime but also step away from neighbourhood and preventative work.

*Our comment on public sector pay policies and affordability*

- 2.19 We observe the parties' warnings of the PSNI facing a possibly insuperable set of challenges as it experiences very severe budgetary pressures at a time of increased security threat and higher demand. We are deeply concerned by the Chief Constable's comment about the 'precarious' funding situation and the implications for effective policing, the DOJ stating that Northern Ireland risks becoming an unsafe environment and the fears expressed by the NIPB and the PFNI that the police service is now at 'breaking point'.
- 2.20 Furthermore, all parties stressed to us the threat posed by the demands on the PSNI and its affordability position to its neighbourhood policing function. We recognise the critical importance of this aspect of the PSNI's work to its strategy for maintaining safer communities, enhancing confidence in policing, and managing overall demand.
- 2.21 We also note the striking contrast between the funding allocated to the Police Uplift Programme in England and Wales in the last three years and the difficult financial position of the PSNI.
- 2.22 Assessing the affordability of pay rise recommendations in the Northern Ireland context is very challenging, especially given the extensive budget pressures. We note that a 5% pay award has been assumed by the PSNI in financial planning for 2023/24. While we are cognisant of the extremely

difficult situation that the PSNI faces, we would not properly discharge our remit if we were to base our recommendations on pre-determined budgetary considerations alone rather than the needs of the police service, including the other, sometimes competing, factors set out in our terms of reference, especially given continuing economic uncertainty and cost-of-living pressures.

### **The economy and labour market**

2.23 HM Treasury said in its evidence that ensuring inflation fell back to target was the number one priority for Government. Inflation was forecast to have peaked and was expected to fall to 5.5% on average across the financial year ending (FYE) 2024. HM Treasury also reported that: positive recruitment and retention trends in the public sector over the pandemic were starting to unwind; high levels of vacancies were an economy-wide phenomenon which were expected to ease as the labour market loosened; and the Office for Budgetary Reform expected unemployment to rise.

2.24 Most of the Northern Ireland parties expressed concern about the rising cost of living. The DOJ emphasised in its evidence to us that Northern Ireland has a small open economy particularly vulnerable to national and international conditions outside of its control. The DOJ emphasised that the Northern Ireland economy was in the midst of the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades, alongside recovering and rebuilding after the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the DOJ and the PFNI stressed to us the profound impact of the cost-of-living crisis on households and families, with the PFNI tracking price trends for daily necessities such as food, home energy and vehicle fuel. In addition, the NIPB and PSNI highlighted the competitiveness of the labour market and recent increases in job vacancies in the Northern Ireland economy.

### *Our comment on the economy and labour market*

2.25 Our report has been completed during a period of significant economic uncertainty. We set out below the latest UK-wide and Northern Ireland

economic and labour market indicators as at 31 May 2023, available to us when finalising our recommendations:

- *Inflation.* Inflation has been high over the last year, with the twelve-month increase in the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) peaking at 11.1% in October 2022. In April 2023, the CPI annual increase was 8.7%, the CPI including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) annual increase was 7.8% and the Retail Prices Index (RPI) annual increase was 11.4%. Separate inflation figures are not available for Northern Ireland.
- The largest upward contributions to the annual rate of inflation in April 2023 came from energy prices and food. The CPI showed that domestic electricity prices increased by 17.3% over the year to April 2023 and domestic gas prices by 36.2%. Food prices in the CPI increased by 19.3% over the year to March 2023.
- The Bank of England base interest rate has increased from 0.1% at the start of December 2021 to 4.5% in May 2023 to try to slow rising prices. Rising interest rates have a knock-on effect on mortgage payments for some years. Examining the detailed components of the RPI showed that mortgage interest payments had increased by 55.1% over the year to April 2023.
- In its March 2023 Economic and Fiscal Outlook<sup>11</sup>, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) expected CPI inflation to fall during 2023 and average 2.9% in the fourth quarter of 2023.
- In its May 2023 Monetary Policy Report<sup>12</sup>, the Bank of England expected inflation to fall to around 5% by the end of 2023. However, it noted that food prices were likely to rise faster than this.
- *Economic growth.* The UK gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated to have increased by 4.1% in 2022. The Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index (broadly equivalent to the output measure of GDP) increased by 2.9% in 2022.

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<sup>11</sup> O BR (March 2023), Economic and Fiscal Outlook. Available at: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2023/> [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

<sup>12</sup> Bank of England (May 2023), Monetary Policy Report. Available at: <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy-report/2023/may-2023> [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

- In March, the OBR estimated that UK GDP would fall by 0.2% in 2023, but its forecasts implied that the technical definition of a recession would be avoided. It expected GDP to regain its pre-pandemic peak in the middle of 2024.
- *Labour market.* Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time Information (RTI) data indicate that the number of UK employees on payrolls in April 2023 was 1.0% higher than a year earlier and 2.8% higher than the pre-pandemic peak in January 2020. In Northern Ireland the number of employees on payrolls in April 2023 was 1.5% higher than a year earlier and 4.3% higher than the pre-pandemic peak in March 2020.
- At 72.0%, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 in Northern Ireland for the three months to March 2023 was the second lowest for any region in the UK (the rate for Wales was 71.5%, while for the UK as a whole it was 75.9%). The LFS unemployment rate for people aged 16 and over was lower in Northern Ireland for the three months to March 2023 (2.5%) than any other region in the UK (3.9% for the UK as a whole) and also lower than in the Republic of Ireland (3.9% for the single month of April 2023<sup>13</sup>). The economic inactivity rate remained higher in Northern Ireland than in any other region of the UK, at 26.1% of people aged 16 to 64, compared with 21.0% in the UK as a whole in the three months to March 2023<sup>14</sup>.
- *Earnings.* PAYE RTI data show that median earnings across the UK grew by 7.4% in the year to April 2023. Northern Ireland saw growth in median earnings of 6.6% over the same period. Median earnings in Northern Ireland were 7.7% below the UK median in April 2023. The difference is primarily due to significantly lower earnings in the private sector in Northern Ireland relative to the UK. In the context of pay parity, annual growth in Average Weekly Earnings in Great Britain was, excluding

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<sup>13</sup> Central Statistics Office (May 2023), *Monthly Unemployment April 2023*. Available at <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-mue/monthlyunemploymentapril2023/> [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

<sup>14</sup> The employment rate measures the proportion of the population (aged 16 to 64) in employment; the unemployment rate gives the number of unemployed people (both looking for and available for work) as a proportion of the total number of people (aged 16 and over) either in work or unemployed; and the inactivity rate is the proportion of the population (aged 16 to 64) neither in employment nor unemployed. The different bases for the rates mean they do not add to 100%.

bonuses, 6.7% in the whole economy and 7.0% in the private sector in the three months to March 2023.

- *Pay settlements.* The latest estimates for median pay settlements in the UK in the three months to April 2023 ranged from 5.6% to 7.0%. Our analysis of XpertHR data indicates that over half (53%) of pay awards so far in 2023 were worth 6% or more.

2.26 We note HM Treasury's warning about the risks of pay awards exacerbating the current inflationary pressures, and that further inflation will erode the real value of savings and incomes and could lead to interest rates being elevated for longer. However, we observe that while the rate of inflation is forecast to fall during 2023 it is not forecast to turn negative, and so this represents a slowing in the rate of price rises rather than an expectation that prices will fall. The CPI level was 123.8 in September 2022 and 130.4 in April 2023 (with 2015 being 100). The forecast by the Bank of England suggests it will be between 133 and 134 in the fourth quarter of 2023. Therefore, officers within our remit group will continue to feel the effect of the high inflation seen over the last year, in particular for energy and food prices. We heard on our visit to the PSNI of the financial difficulties that many officers were facing, such as with vehicle fuel, home energy, rent and mortgage payments. There were reports of food banks being set up in police stations and of a recent increase in the number of officers taking on second jobs.

2.27 Surveys by XpertHR<sup>15</sup> and Incomes Data Research (IDR)<sup>16</sup> have indicated that a number of organisations took steps in 2022 in response to cost-of-living pressures that were outside of the headline pay award. Such measures included: one-off non-consolidated payments; making additional pay awards or bringing forward pay reviews; providing financial wellbeing advice or support to employees; and enabling access to employee discount providers. The IDR analysis found that the value of one-off payments ranged between

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<sup>15</sup> XpertHR (October 2022), *Pay planning and forecasts for 2022/2023*. Available at: <https://www.xperthr.co.uk/survey-analysis/pay-planning-and-forecasts-for-20222023/166659/> [Accessed on 19 June 2023, note this report is behind a pay wall]

<sup>16</sup> IDR (February 2023), *Inflation and public sector pay – A report for the FDA*. Available at: <https://www.fda.org.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.aspx?IID=2117&slID=9513> [Accessed on 19 June 2023]

£100 and £3,000, with a median of £500 and an average of £800. The police service has not made similar awards to its officers.

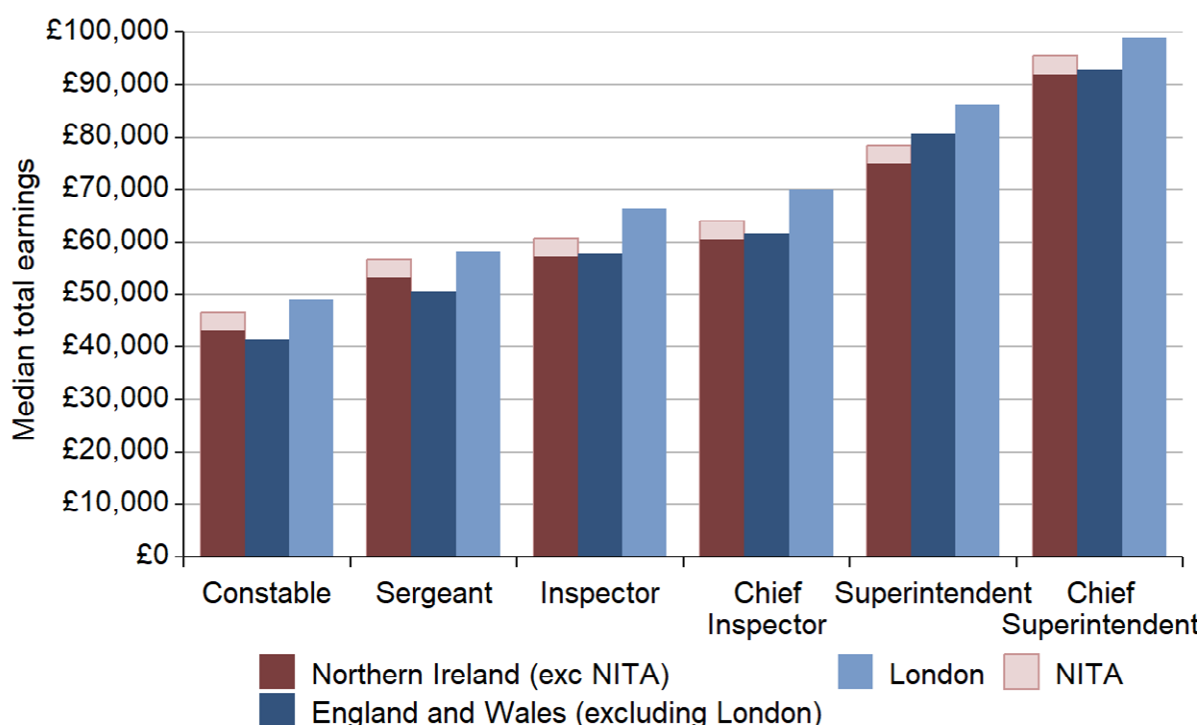
- 2.28 We also note that HM Treasury has told us that public sector earnings growth over the current Spending Review period (FYE 2023 to 2025) should retain broad parity with the private sector. However, we observe again this year that the current economic climate means there is a greater degree of uncertainty around likely earnings growth than in many previous years.

### **Police officer earnings**

#### *Our analysis of police officer earnings*

- 2.29 Our full analysis of police earnings data is set out in Appendix D. This includes consideration of differences between police officer earnings in Northern Ireland and England and Wales and the wider economy. It focuses on earnings comparisons that exclude the NITA, in recognition of the fact that the NITA is an allowance paid to police officers in Northern Ireland in acknowledgement of the challenges particular to the Northern Ireland policing environment and the restrictions faced by officers and their families.
- 2.30 For the FYE 2022, these comparisons showed that median full-time total earnings, excluding the NITA, of Northern Ireland police officers were higher than their counterparts in England and Wales (excluding London) for constables and sergeants, but lower for the inspecting and superintending ranks (Chart 2.1).

**Chart 2.1: Median total earnings, by rank, full-time officers, Northern Ireland and England & Wales, FYE 2022**



Source: OME analysis of Police Earnings Census data, Home Office.

2.31 We note that, with a few exceptions, the basic pay scales for police officers in Northern Ireland are the same as those for officers in England and Wales. Therefore, for constables and sergeants the higher median earnings are mainly as a result of higher levels of overtime worked and the retention of CRTP in Northern Ireland – for full-time constables in FYE 2022 the median value of overtime was nearly £4,500 in Northern Ireland, compared with just over £2,500 in England and Wales. The lower median earnings for superintendents in Northern Ireland (by around £5,800) are as a result of differences in the distribution of superintendents on their pay scale.

#### *Evidence from the parties on police officer earnings*

2.32 HM Treasury considered that the public sector remuneration package remained competitive, when taking account of pay, pensions and wider benefits including job security.

2.33 The PSNI told us on our visit in February 2023 that the number of officers in the federated ranks applying for permission to take on second occupations had risen in the last year, from 128 in 2021 to 250 in 2022 and that this total

was higher than each of the previous five years. The number of authorised second jobs or business interests in 2022 had also increased over each of the previous five years, from 519 in 2017 to 718 in 2021 and 815 in 2022. The most significant increases were seen in care and community, driving and delivery and sales and retail jobs. The PSNI expressed concern at various potential risks arising from these additional activities, including the ability to perform effectively as police officers and being placed in personal danger.

2.34 Also on our visit, officers described essential outgoings, including the cost of fuel to travel to work, as a great financial burden. Some officers reported that they were resorting to family assistance and savings to pay for their journey to work. Others were said to rely on the NITA to manage financially and consequently we were told that the possibility of the value of this allowance being reduced was a cause of great concern among officers.

2.35 The PFNI stated that police officers had suffered a real-terms pay cut of 28.7% at the lowest end of the constable pay scale over the last decade. It stressed that the value of police pay had been continuously eroded since 2011 as a result of three pay freezes, five 1% pay caps and pay restraint. It added that police officers were presently battling a painful rise in the cost of living while putting their lives on the line every day to protect the public.

#### *Our comment on police officer earnings*

2.36 As in our previous reports, we do not make any judgement on what the correct level of police earnings relative to other pay comparators should be. However, we observe that decreasing differentials over the long term have potentially negative implications for the morale and motivation of officers and for recruitment and retention. The same is true of long-term decreases in real-terms earnings of police officers, as highlighted by the results of staff surveys.

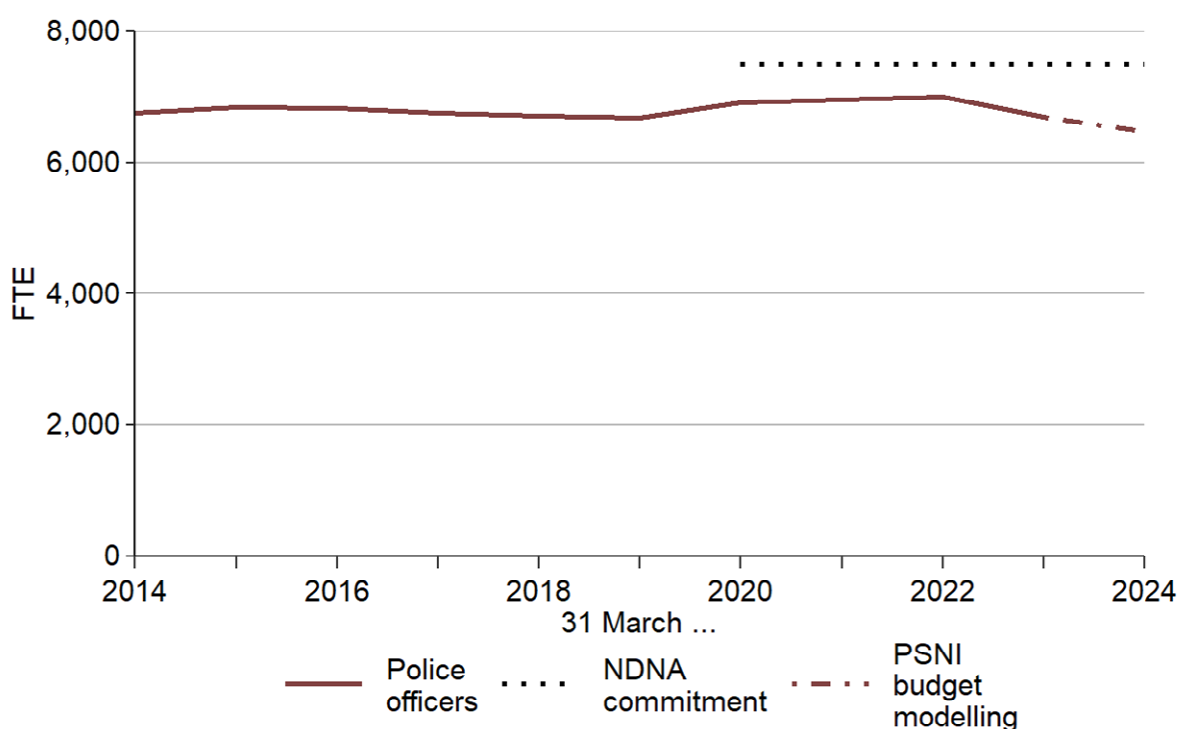
#### **PSNI workforce and diversity**

2.37 We have set out our full analysis of PSNI workforce data in Appendix D. We set out some of the key points below.

2.38 Officer numbers increased between March 2019 and March 2022 (Chart 2.2), and in March 2022 there were just over 7,000 full-time equivalent (FTE)

officers. This was the highest number since March 2012 but below the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) commitment of 7,500 officers. However, between March 2022 and March 2023 the number of officers fell by just over 300 FTE officers (4.4%) to 6,694 FTE, just 11 officers more than in March 2019, when the lowest March total since the creation of the PSNI was recorded. In addition, the PSNI reported that on 1 June 2023 its officer total was 6,673 FTE. Furthermore, it told us that budget modelling for the FYE 2024 was based on a reduction in police officer numbers to 6,459 FTE.

**Chart 2.2: Number of police officers and budget modelling (FTE), Northern Ireland, March 2014 – March 2024**



Source: PSNI data.

2.39 We note figures from the PSNI website showing that on 1 February 2023:

- 31.6% of PSNI officers were female;
- the community background of 32.4% of PSNI officers was Perceived Roman Catholic and for 66.3% was Perceived Protestant (compared with 45.7% and 43.5% respectively of the Northern Ireland population in the 2021 census); and
- 0.6% of PSNI officers said they were from an ethnic minority (compared with 3.4% of the Northern Ireland population in the 2021 census).

- 2.40 PSNI data showed that in its latest recruitment campaign in 2021, 30% of applicants were Catholic. In the previous year, 31% of applicants and 23% of those appointed were Catholic.

*Our comment on PSNI workforce and diversity*

- 2.41 We note with concern the 5% fall in constable numbers between March 2022 and March 2023 given the scale of the challenges facing the force and the implications for diversity. Diversity is an important factor in operational efficiency. We observe that the proportion of female officers, Catholic officers and those from ethnic minorities remain below levels representative of the communities served by the PSNI. We note that the evidence on protected characteristics is currently limited. We welcome initiatives in England and Wales policing to improve the quality of data collected on protected characteristics. We would encourage the Northern Ireland parties to engage with these initiatives and supply more such data in future.

**Recruitment and retention**

- 2.42 The PSNI expressed dismay at the impact of its confirmed budget for 2023/24 on its recruitment plans, officer resilience, demographic representativeness, neighbourhood policing function and overall operational effectiveness. It said in written evidence that reductions in police officer numbers would necessitate difficult operational decisions, such as reducing frontline services which would affect the most vulnerable in society, and force the service towards emergency response only. It explained that such an action would detrimentally affect the perceived legitimacy of the service and consequently its ability to attract under-represented groups to the organisation.
- 2.43 In addition, the NIPB and the PFNI both drew our attention to an increase in the number of probationary officers resigning voluntarily from the PSNI in 2021/22 (49 probationers), up from 25 in the previous 12 months. Both organisations cited the increased cost of living as a major cause.
- 2.44 The PSNI told us that these voluntary resignation figures amounted to a slight increase in the attrition rate (the number resigning in their first two and a half years against the number recruited) among its student and probationary

officers. It advised that in November 2022, the attrition rate within this group stood at 12%, compared with 8% in FYE 2022 and 5% in FYE 2021. It stated further that the level of the starting salary for new recruits (£23,556 until 31 March 2023) was a key factor in this recent rise in attrition. The PSNI observed on our visit in February 2023 that it was clear that student officer pay was insufficient and that the specific nature of threat, risk and harm in Northern Ireland was affecting the PSNI's ability to attract and retain a talented workforce.

- 2.45 The NIPB expressed concern that officers might decide to leave the PSNI when they assessed the starting salary against the demands of the police officer role in a competitive jobs market. The PFNI said that, anecdotally, officers were leaving for other employment where the financial rewards were greater and the daily pressures considerably less. On our visit in February 2023, an officer commented that it was also possible to find jobs with equivalent levels of pay, but without the long commute, high travel costs and risks generally associated with being a police officer in Northern Ireland.
- 2.46 The NIPB also expressed concern that large numbers of officers could leave the service particularly in response to the terrorist attack on DCI John Caldwell, the threat made against officers' family members and other recent terrorist incidents. The PSNI observed that the new generation of police officers did not have the 'instinct for fear' possessed by officers who had lived through the Troubles. It too warned that the increase in attacks on officers and the threat to officers' families could make new officers reassess their career choice.
- 2.47 In oral evidence in April 2023, the PSNI said it was training 85 student officers between April and June 2023. It explained that budgetary constraints meant that this group had been waiting to start training since being recruited in 2020 and appointed in November 2022. Furthermore, the budgetary constraints meant that the PSNI's most recent police officer recruitment exercise was held in November 2021 and that police officer recruitment, which had been paused between March 2022 and April 2023, would be paused again from June 2023.

- 2.48 The PSNI also told us that it was considering Targeted Variable Pay to recruit and retain officers in Derry and Strabane. It said that the area was particularly challenging to police and so was not attractive to officers, most of whom lived elsewhere. It added that it was historically the hardest area to fill on promotion or transfer and unpopular with probationers, especially for those with long commutes because of the high cost of fuel.
- 2.49 The PSNI informed us that in early 2023 it was introducing a new live exit interview with Human Resources staff to accompany the existing written return for those resigning.

*Our comment on recruitment and retention*

- 2.50 We note the striking contrast between the funding allocated to the Police Uplift Programme in England and Wales in the last three years and the implications of the PSNI's difficult financial position for officer recruitment and retention and the future quality of the police service in Northern Ireland. We have serious concerns about the impact of the combination of budget-related reductions in officer numbers and the deterioration in the security environment on officer wellbeing and the safety of the public in Northern Ireland.
- 2.51 We observe that the PSNI's budgetary situation has serious implications for the size and demographic representativeness of the police officer workforce in Northern Ireland and therefore the legitimacy and effectiveness of the service it provides. The resultant need to pause recruitment again from June 2023, and to limit opportunities for promotion and development, will inevitably have an impact on the diversity profile of PSNI officers. We are very concerned that the deteriorating security situation, the recent increase in terrorist (and other) attacks on police officers and the terrorist threat made against officers' families in March 2023, will deter individuals from joining and remaining in the PSNI. This is particularly in the context of a buoyant labour market where less demanding jobs are available at similar or higher levels of pay and with shorter and less expensive journeys to work.
- 2.52 In addition, we note the reports of an increase in the resignation rate among student and probationary officers. We therefore request this data again next

year and ask for it to include reasons given for leaving as part of the new exit interview process and for information on leavers' protected characteristics. The increase in early resignations also leaves us very concerned about the effect on the morale and motivation of officers who remain, especially at a time of increasing demand. We would like to hear next year about the PSNI's strategy in current circumstances for maintaining and improving levels of diversity among its police officers, and for attracting and retaining high calibre applicants with the right skills, commitment and attitudes.

## **Morale and motivation**

### *Surveys*

- 2.53 The PSNI had conducted a morale and wellbeing survey in December 2022 with a 46% response rate. 95% of those who responded reported that they were very concerned or fairly concerned about the cost-of-living crisis. The most concerning factor (reported by 86% of respondents) was the cost of vehicle fuel. Other causes of unease were household bills (82%) including utilities, food and childcare costs, mortgage or rent payments (61%) and debt incurred (51%). The NIPB reported that such was the scale of concern within the PSNI that a Cost-of-Living Gold Group was established to consider what support the service could provide, such as food banks and financial support.
- 2.54 The SANI provided information from the Police Superintendents' Association (PSA)/SANI pay survey of December 2022 that 84% of respondents did not agree that they were able to maintain their standard of living. On the other hand this survey showed that between 2021 and 2022, dissatisfaction with the value of the NITA fell (from 50% to 32%) and satisfaction rose (from 31% to 38%).

### *Sickness absence*

- 2.55 The PSNI told us that sickness absence rates in 2022/23 were projected to be 51% above target (at 16.9 working days lost instead of 11.20). It stated that sickness absence grew in 2022 compared with 2021. It explained that from April to December 2022, there was a 13% rise in occurrences and an 11.6% rise in the number of officers involved, compared with the same period in

2021. The PSNI told us that this rise was linked primarily to an increase in recorded cases of COVID-19 compared to the same period the previous year.

2.56 The PSNI also provided us with the results of a snapshot survey of sickness absence conducted in February 2023. This found that the main types of sickness absence by far were recorded as psychological (215) or musculoskeletal (118) in nature, while the number with respiratory illnesses or COVID-19 were relatively low (21). The NIPB told us that it was very concerned about sickness absence rates in the PSNI and noted a rise in absences due to psychological causes. It also observed that, on average, 519 PSNI officers were absent every day in the 2022/23 financial year, which equated to 8% of officers. In oral evidence, the PSNI added that its reduction in headcount had impacted on officer resilience. It emphasised that the service had to be properly resourced if it was to improve morale and break the cycle of related issues, such as sickness absence, particularly in the context of the raised terrorist threat level. It observed that an increase in officers would help to mitigate current levels of sickness absence and reduce the stress and strain on the existing workforce.

2.57 In addition, the PSNI reported an increase in assaults on police officers. In February 2023, they had reached a five-year high: from April 2022 to the start of February 2023, there were 923 assaults on police officers. It explained that assaults with injury had increased year-on-year from 516 in FYE 2019, to 911 in FYE 2022. On the day before our visit to the PSNI, one officer had been knifed in the neck and another in the face. We were told that more than 40 attacks on officers had occurred in the previous seven days.

*Overtime payments or a non-pensionable supplement for the inspecting ranks*

2.58 This year the PFNI drew attention to the additional hours that many in the inspecting ranks were required to work in performing their duties. It said that there were growing concerns about the impact of excessive and unpredictable hours of work on the health of individual inspectors. It advised that anecdotal evidence showed that they regularly worked in excess of their salaried hours and well over the 48-hours limit specified in working time regulations. It

proposed the re-introduction of overtime payments or a non-pensionable supplement for the inspecting ranks.

- 2.59 On our February 2023 visit to the PSNI we heard that the number of inspectors had recently diminished, so increasing the work pressures on those who remained. Unlike constables and sergeants, the inspecting ranks did not receive overtime. This meant that they could work 16-hour days but take home less pay overall than the sergeants they managed and be detailed to work nightshifts at weekends for no organisational penalty. The matter of recompense for inspectors' long hours was a longstanding issue.

#### *Untaken rest days*

- 2.60 The PFNI informed us that the inspecting ranks were owed many untaken rest days. It asked for Northern Ireland to be brought in line with police regulations introduced in 2020 in England and Wales allowing inspectors and chief inspectors to carry over, for a further 12-month period, any rest days in lieu not taken due to exceptional circumstances, exigencies of duty or work demands. The SANI told us that its members also continued to report the loss of rest days. It repeated its request this year for payment for rest days and public holidays that could not be taken due to the exigencies of duty. It too requested an extension of their availability for a further 12-month period.
- 2.61 PSNI data showed that untaken rest days for each of the federated ranks had increased in comparison with 2021 and that the total at inspector rank was particularly high in comparison with the others. The SANI advised us separately on 28 April 2023 that officers in the superintending ranks held a total of 809 untaken rest days between them, that 49 days was the maximum for one officer, the average was 11.2 days and the median was 8.5 days. In addition, the PFNI and SANI highlighted to us that, regardless of the length of time actually worked, only an 8-hour day was banked in return.

#### *Our comment on morale and motivation*

- 2.62 High morale and strong motivation drive productivity. We are grateful for all surveys conducted with our remit group on morale and motivation. We continue to be concerned at the impact of cost-of-living, resource and work

pressures on PSNI officers' morale, motivation and wellbeing and by reported increases in both sickness absence and assaults on officers.

2.63 During our visits this year both to the PSNI, and to forces in England and Wales, concerns were expressed about the small pay differential between the inspector and chief inspector ranks and the big pay gap between the top of the chief inspector rank and the bottom of the superintendent rank. We also heard about the large workload and excessive hours worked by the inspecting ranks for which they could not claim overtime. This meant that on some operations the overtime-earning sergeant, or even constable, could earn more than the inspector. In the interests of the overall coherence of the police officer pay structure, we ask our Northern Ireland parties to provide detailed evidence on the differentials between the inspector, chief inspector and superintendent ranks in the next pay round. We have made the same request in our England and Wales Report.

2.64 Since April 2020 in England and Wales the inspecting and superintending ranks, in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of a chief officer, have been able to carry over leave for up to 24 months. We would support extending this provision to these ranks in the PSNI.

### **Legal obligations on the police service in Northern Ireland and relevant changes to employment law**

2.65 Both the NIPB and PFNI asked for officers in Northern Ireland to be brought in line with those in England and Wales and receive 26 weeks' maternity or adoption leave on full pay rather than the 18 weeks they currently received. The PSNI advised us that in May 2023 the PSNI's Strategic Management Board would consider an increase to 26 weeks in line with England and Wales. However, the PSNI said it would not be supporting the proposal. This was on affordability grounds and because it would diverge from general employment rights in Northern Ireland.

*Our comment on legal obligations on the police service in Northern Ireland and relevant changes to employment law*

- 2.66 We thank the NIPB and PFNI for bringing the difference in maternity and adoption leave arrangements between Northern Ireland and England and Wales to our attention. We support the introduction of the proposed increase to 26 weeks in Northern Ireland and ask to be kept informed on developments.
- 2.67 In our view, the principle of parity with England and Wales could extend to terms and conditions of employment. We ask the Northern Ireland parties to explore this issue and respond to us next year.

## **Chapter 3 – Pay proposals and recommendations for 2023/24**

### **Introduction**

- 3.1 In this chapter we make recommendations and observations on the pay and allowances of police officers in Northern Ireland for the 2023/24 pay year.

### **Parity on pay and allowances**

- 3.2 The recommendations contained in this chapter are based on the principle of parity on pay and allowances. We define parity as meaning the same basic pay scales and allowances across the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect the fact that the role of police officer is fundamentally the same across all three areas, while also recognising the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions.

### **Basic pay award**

- 3.3 The remit letter that we received from the Department of Justice on 3 February 2023 asked us to recommend on how to apply the pay award for 2023/24 for police officers in the PSNI.
- 3.4 All the parties sought pay parity with England and Wales police officers in 2023/24.
- 3.5 We invited all the parties who had not made a numerical pay award proposal in written evidence to do so. The DOJ did not provide a figure. It said that the PRRB should consider a fair award which recognised the important contribution made by PSNI officers while taking cognisance of the wider budgetary context and affordability. The NIPB did not provide a figure either but repeated its call for pay parity with England and Wales.
- 3.6 The PSNI, PFNI, SANI and CPOSA all sought a pay award that would reflect inflation. In April 2023, the PSNI told us that in order to uphold the principle of parity on pay and allowances with police services in England and Wales, it was proposing a substantial increase for police officers in line with the CPI. The CPI rate at the time was 10.1%.

- 3.7 In addition, the PSNI sought a significant award funded by HM Treasury or the Department of Finance to reflect the P-factor. In oral evidence, the PSNI explained that while the NPCC had produced a nationally aligned range of unique factors that applied to the police officer role, there were additional elements that applied in the PSNI. It said, for example, that all PSNI officers were armed for self-protection and that this made it unique in comparison with England and Wales. It added that exceptional levels of threat, risk and harm found in Northern Ireland meant PSNI officers should be given extra weighting. It said this had implications for both the P-factor and the NITA.
- 3.8 The PFNI proposed in written evidence a uniform 17% pay award across all ranks to reflect the current rate of CPI inflation, plus an additional 1%, and parity with England and Wales.
- 3.9 The SANI, in keeping with the Police Superintendents' Association (for England and Wales), sought a 10.7% uplift to pay in 2023 for all ranks. It said that this was reasonable given the real-terms cut in pay experienced by officers since 2010. The joint PSA/SANI written evidence said that a pay award that matched inflation was the only fair and acceptable recommendation in the circumstances, while the CPOSA said the pay award needed to be in line with inflation to retain experienced and effective officers in such a high-risk environment.
- 3.10 On our February 2023 visit to the PSNI, officers expressing opinions on the pay award for 2023/24 tended to say that it needed to match inflation. Most of the officers we met drew our attention to cost-of-living pressures and they described essential outgoings, including the cost of fuel to travel to work, as a great financial burden. Some officers reported that they were resorting to family assistance and savings to pay for their journey to work. Others were said to rely on the NITA to get by. In addition, we were told that not having the ability to strike was clearly damaging for police officer pay levels.
- 3.11 In oral evidence, the NIPB told us that the numeric value of the police officer award had to balance affordability with the other workforces taking industrial action and securing better terms and conditions as a result. The NIPB said it

wanted to make a general, strong, statement about others who did have industrial rights exerting them to achieve a more favourable settlement.

*Our comment and recommendation on the basic pay award*

3.12 In making our pay award recommendation we considered a number of factors which we discuss below.

Pay parity

3.13 As requested by all the Northern Ireland parties, we have upheld the principle of parity with England and Wales on pay. On the basic pay award, we define parity as meaning the same basic pay scales across the police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in recognition of the fact that the role of police officer is fundamentally the same across all three geographical areas. This principle set the context for our consideration of the factors set out below:

Affordability

3.14 Looking across Government as a whole, we observe that there is inevitably flexibility in all funding arrangements. We recognise the likely impact of the overall Northern Ireland budgetary situation on the PSNI and its expected funding shortfall in 2023/24. The PSNI told us that it had provisionally budgeted for a 5% average pay increase in 2023/24. The DOJ informed us that a 5% pay award would cost £20 million and that every additional 1% in pay uplift would cost £4 million.

3.15 We note the stark contrast between Northern Ireland and England and Wales on affordability in the public sector and more specifically on policing. We also note that the affordability of the implications of the parity principle on pay and allowances poses far greater challenges for the PSNI than for police forces in England and Wales. In spite of the problems arising from the Northern Ireland Budget, all parties sought pay parity with England and Wales police officers in 2023/24. In addition, the PSNI, PFNI, SANI and CPOSA sought a pay award that would reflect inflation.

Policing environment in Northern Ireland

3.16 We recognise that the policing environment in Northern Ireland is different from that in England and Wales; for example, all police officers in the PSNI

are armed for self-protection. Furthermore, in March 2023, the level of the terrorism threat was raised to 'SEVERE', meaning an attack was highly likely. We regard these aspects of policing that are unique to Northern Ireland as being relevant to our consideration of the NITA, which is separate from our consideration of the basic pay award for 2023/24.

- 3.17 In addition, the PSNI reported an overall 5% increase in crime in Northern Ireland in 2023 on the previous year and the NIPB told us that the crime level was the highest for 12 years. We learned on our visit that levels of paramilitary activity and serious and organised crime activity had risen. In written evidence, the PSNI advised us that it faced a range of unique challenges arising from factors such as political instability, the increased cost of living and strike action by other workforces. Furthermore, levels of domestic violence and sexual offences had grown. In addition, the number of assaults on police officers was at its highest for five years. All these elements had intensified Northern Ireland-specific levels of threat, risk and harm to its police officers.

#### Economic factors

- 3.18 This has been a challenging year in terms of the economic climate. The wider economy including the level of pay settlements and the cost of living are factors in our deliberations. Furthermore, as set out in Chapter 2, there continues to be significant uncertainty about the economic climate. CPI inflation was 8.7% in the year to April 2023, but both the OBR and the Bank of England expect it to have fallen significantly by the fourth quarter of 2023. However, as we also observed in Chapter 2, the rate of inflation is not forecast to turn negative. Officers within our remit group will continue to feel the effect of the high inflation seen over the last year, in particular for energy and food prices as overall prices are not expected to fall.
- 3.19 We also agree with policing parties that the labour market will remain competitive. The number of employees on payrolls has continued to grow over the past year, and the unemployment rate has remained low. We have also given weight in our considerations to median earnings growth in Northern Ireland based on PAYE RTI data. As set out in Chapter 2, in April 2023,

median earnings in Northern Ireland were 6.6% higher than a year earlier. In addition, in the context of pay parity, we note that annual growth in Average Weekly Earnings in Great Britain was, excluding bonuses, 6.7% in the whole economy and 7.0% in the private sector in the three months to March 2023. Furthermore, there is evidence of a number of organisations having taken steps outside of the headline pay award, such as making one-off non-consolidated payments, in response to cost-of-living pressures.

- 3.20 The police service has not made similar awards to its officers. We therefore continue to be concerned about the impact on the lowest paid police officers of the substantial increase in the cost of living and the ongoing economic volatility. Most of these officers are on the frontline of policing dealing with the public and handling complex incidents often at personal risk. We heard on our visit to the PSNI of the financial difficulties that many officers were facing, such as with vehicle fuel, home energy, rent and mortgage payments. There were reports of food banks being set up in police stations and of a recent increase in the number of officers taking on second jobs. We judge that, with the exception of assistance with energy bills, it is unlikely that the majority of police officers will benefit from further government support to help the most vulnerable households with the rising cost of living.

#### The right to strike

- 3.21 We have monitored the impact of recent industrial disputes across the public sector. Industrial action in England in the NHS and schools has led to the UK Government offering pay increases above its 3.5% affordability threshold for 2023/24 plus additional one-off payments to top up the 2022/23 award to NHS staff and teachers in England. The NHS offer was accepted by the NHS Staff Council and is soon to be paid to staff. In a number of other cases industrial action has also led to other employers making significantly enhanced pay offers. We observe, for example, that the original pay offer that firefighters in the UK received for 2022/23 was 2%. Following the threat of industrial action, they received a revised offer in February 2023 from their employers, of a 7% pay rise backdated to July last year, plus 5% from 1 July 2023.

- 3.22 A number of parties highlighted to us the prohibition on police officers taking industrial action. They told us that officers were watching carefully those sectors able to take action. It is important that the police service attracts and retains officers from diverse backgrounds with the right capabilities and attitudes to deal with the changing nature and increasing complexity of demand. We agree with policing parties that say that we and government collectively have a strong moral obligation to deliver a fair and just pay award because police officers do not have the right to strike.
- 3.23 In addition to these immediate issues, we considered a number of longer-term factors, set out in the following sections.

#### Recruitment and Retention

- 3.24 We share the Northern Ireland parties' concerns at the likely impact of the Northern Ireland budgetary position in 2023/24 on the PSNI's ability to recruit and retain officers. We recognise the stark contrast between the planned cuts in police officer numbers compared with the Uplift Programme in England and Wales.
- 3.25 A police service representative of the population it serves is vital to police legitimacy and effectiveness. We are interested in a breakdown of resignation rates in the PSNI by gender, religion and ethnic origin, particularly in the early years of service. We also observe that efforts to keep officers in the police service will not be assisted by a remuneration package that is insufficiently attractive to compensate them for the personal risks they face.
- 3.26 In addition, our view is that, to meet the challenges posed by the current policing environment, recruitment and retention policies need to be about more than just capacity. Notwithstanding current budgetary issues, the recruitment and retention of officers of the right calibre able to work with all communities in Northern Ireland is critical. We observe that officers need to have the relational skills required to manage complexity, respond to vulnerability, de-escalate social tension, and build and sustain public trust and confidence. Officers on the frontline have to exercise discretion in fast-moving, challenging and often dangerous situations. The police service needs

to recruit officers with maturity and integrity able to develop these skills through investment in their training and effective supervision. We judge that there needs to be a competitive remuneration package that attracts and then keeps these types of officers in the service.

#### Morale and Motivation

- 3.27 We continue to be very concerned by the results from staff association and police service surveys showing low levels of morale in comparison with previous years. Given the challenges the police service faces that we outlined above, this is cause for serious concern. Good morale drives productivity and shapes behaviour. We accept that pay is not the only factor affecting officers' morale. However, we were struck by the evidence we received from the Northern Ireland parties about the damage to officer morale arising particularly from the delays in the payment of the annual pay award and increments owed, especially at a time of high inflation.
- 3.28 We note the concern expressed by parties regarding the real-terms reduction in pay of officers over the last decade. Our analysis shows that the differentials between median police earnings and the median earnings of comparator groups have generally been declining since 2011. Over the long term, decreasing differentials with comparator groups have potentially negative implications for the morale and motivation of officers and for recruitment and retention. We are very concerned that, unless addressed, this will impede the ability of the police service to retain a diverse workforce with the capabilities it needs.

#### Targeting of the award and the shape of other settlements in the wider public sector

- 3.29 We have considered again this year the case for recommending a targeted flat cash differential award as we remain concerned about the impact on the lowest-paid police officers of the substantial increase in the cost of living and ongoing economic volatility. We also reflected carefully on the shape of awards in other parts of the public sector.
- 3.30 Our 2022 pay recommendation of £1,900 to all police officer pay points was, in our view, the right approach given the circumstances at the time. However,

it inevitably reduced the differentials between ranks and such an approach is not sustainable over the long term. Officers of all ranks should be properly valued for the role they fulfil. We are particularly concerned, for instance, about the middle ranks of policing, who as we are aware from our visit programme are under significant pressure and, unlike the more junior ranks, are unable to claim overtime.

- 3.31 In addition, as we have said in previous reports, we do not favour non-consolidated awards. The long-term value of consolidated awards is significantly higher than non-consolidated awards. They are pensionable and enhance the overall remuneration package, thereby increasing the attractiveness of the profession to new recruits and supporting retention. There is also a risk that morale will be damaged if non-consolidated awards are not consolidated in subsequent years. Moreover, we have listened carefully to the views of policing parties who, on the grounds of fairness, favoured a universal percentage uplift for all ranks in 2023/24. Parties argued that last year's pay award was divisive. In addition, all the Northern Ireland parties sought pay parity with England and Wales police officers in 2023/24. We have also taken steps to address the financial pressures on the most junior ranks of the police service through our recommendations on starting salaries.

#### Pay recommendation

- 3.32 In reaching our pay recommendation for 2023/24, we have taken into account all the factors listed above. We note in particular the economic situation, pay developments in Northern Ireland and our analysis of recruitment, retention, motivation and morale. We have therefore concluded that a pay uplift of 7% across all ranks below that of deputy chief constable is the most suitable approach. We recognise that this is a substantial increase especially given the budgetary position in Northern Ireland. However, in recognition of the principle of pay parity, our obligation to deliver a fair and just pay award, and because police officers do not have the right to strike, we judge that it is justified. The 7% increase in 2023/24, combined with the 5% uplift to the police pay bill that we recommended in 2022/23, will give the police service a settlement that is

comparable with pay offers in other parts of the public sector such as firefighters and some NHS staff in England. Our recommendation for 2023/24 combined with the 2022/23 award would have the effect of raising pay point 1 of the constable pay scale from £24,780 in September 2021 to £28,551 in September 2023, an increase of 15.2% for officers at the lower end of the pay scale. In its evidence, the PSNI told us that it had provisionally budgeted for a 5% average pay increase in 2023/24. A fully funded pay award is required, with no adverse impact on officer or staff numbers or police services.

**Recommendation 1. We recommend a consolidated increase of 7% to all police officer pay points for all ranks up to and including assistant chief constable from 1 September 2023.**

*Delays in the payment of the annual award and increments*

- 3.33 When we visited the PSNI on 1 February this year, officers were still awaiting the outcome of the 2022/23 pay award and contractual increments owed. These were not confirmed for payment to the federated and superintending ranks until the end of February 2023, while chief police officers had to wait until the end of April.
- 3.34 The PFNI stressed to us that not only was this the sixth year in which officers had experienced significant delays in receiving their annual pay award, but additional delays affecting the payment of officers' annual, contractual, increments had happened for the second time. It explained that this additional problem had first arisen in September 2021 and damaged officers' morale and caused particular concern, especially while the cost of living was so high. The PFNI said this apparent disregard for the personal finances of serving officers was a very real source of anger and disillusionment for its members.
- 3.35 The PFNI therefore asked the PRRB to support the addition of a determination to PSNI regulations stipulating the annual payment of increments and so align the PSNI with Determination F of the England and

Wales Police Regulations 2003. Both the PSNI and the NIPB called for the payment of increments to be separated from the annual pay award.

- 3.36 We note that the federated and superintending ranks did not receive their pay award or increments until the end of February 2023, while chief police officers had to wait until the end of April 2023. We recall that the factor most commonly cited in the 2021 PFNI workforce survey as having a negative effect on personal morale was the delay in implementing the pay increase and/or pay increments. 92% of respondents had reported that this negatively affected their personal morale. As we stated last year, the delay in the payment of salary increments in 2021/22 should not be repeated and observed that it was poor practice, affected officers in practical ways, and damaged their morale.
- 3.37 We welcome the PFNI's proposal this year for the payment of increments to be made a police regulation as in England and Wales. This would also uphold the principle of parity with England and Wales. We therefore recommend the introduction in Northern Ireland of a police regulation on officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time.

**Recommendation 2. We recommend the introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time.**

### **Starting salaries for student officers**

- 3.38 Our recommendation that the Chief Constable of Northern Ireland should be granted the same discretion as chief constables in England and Wales to vary the starting salaries of constables was accepted in March 2021. We were advised that the Chief Constable would use this discretion to raise the starting salary from pay point 0 to pay point 1 from the first day of training. Previously, student officers in the PSNI reached pay point 1 on completion of training and attestation, normally at 21 weeks.

- 3.39 This year, the PSNI told us that this increase in the starting salary to pay point 1 on the first day of training had been implemented from 1 April 2023. It explained that the first recipients were the 85 student officers who began their training between April and June 2023.

*Our comment and recommendation on starting salaries for student officers*

- 3.40 We welcome implementation by the PSNI of our recommendation to raise the starting salary of student officers from pay point 0 to pay point 1 from the first day of training. We expect this change to alleviate some of the cost-of-living pressures on student officers and assist with recruitment in a competitive market.

- 3.41 We observe that some police services in England and Wales are still recruiting new officers on pay point 0. Starting salaries need to be competitive to ensure the next generation of officers has the capabilities and attitudes to deal with the changing nature and increasing complexity of demand driven by technology and other factors. Given the changing nature of policing and the new skills officers will require, we judge more needs to be done on starting pay to ensure the police service is able to recruit the right officers to meet the challenges ahead. We therefore recommend the removal of pay point 0 of the constable pay scale from 1 September 2023 as set out in our England and Wales report. This recommendation is an interim measure pending the forthcoming NPCC review of constable base pay and starting salaries.

**Recommendation 3. We recommend the removal of pay point 0 of the constable pay scale from 1 September 2023.**

**Payment of the first constable increment**

- 3.42 On our visit to the PSNI in February 2023, officers told us that the constable pay scale started too low and needed a more even gradient of increments. Moreover, officers in Derry and Strabane said they predicted a ‘massive exodus’ of officers in the next two years, mainly because starting pay was too low. We also learned that an unintended consequence of officers starting on

pay point 1 from day one from April 2023 onwards is that they will have to wait two years and 21 weeks for their first base pay increment.

*Our comment and recommendation on payment of the first constable increment*

3.43 We judge that a wait of nearly two and a half years for payment of the first constable increment in Northern Ireland is undesirable, especially when the cost of living is so high. Furthermore, there are already serious concerns about whether constables early in their career can be retained in the context of a deteriorating security situation and buoyant labour market. The timing of the payment of the first constable increment in Northern Ireland differs from England and Wales, where all officers starting on pay point 1 move to pay point 2 after twelve months (and progression continues at a rate of one pay point per twelve months of service thereafter). We therefore recommend that the first pay increment for new PSNI officers is brought forward to the twelve-month point. This would assist with both recruitment and retention and uphold the principle of parity on pay and allowances. We also encourage the Northern Ireland parties to engage with the review of constable base pay and starting salaries to be conducted by the NPCC in 2023/24.

**Recommendation 4. We recommend that all constables move to pay point 2 after twelve months at pay point 1, as in England and Wales.**

**Chief superintendent pay scale**

3.44 In written evidence, the SANI asked us to consider, after applying the annual pay award, an increase of £5,675 to pay point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale in recognition of increased levels of responsibility similar to chief officer ranks. The SANI said that the rate at which its members transferred to other forces on improved terms would increase if they were not treated equitably. However, the DOJ said there did not seem to be a retention problem in the chief superintendent rank and therefore was not wedded to the proposal to increase the top pay point.

- 3.45 In oral evidence, the SANI gave a detailed description of the pressures on its members due to workload and the inability to take annual leave combined with lost rest days. The SANI also highlighted the declining levels of morale reported in recent PSA/SANI surveys and that its members were at risk of 'burning out'. The SANI emphasised that the superintending ranks were key to dealing with the operational policing context in Northern Ireland, including the terrorist threat.
- 3.46 A final report submitted to us in 2023 by the steering group for a review of chief officer remuneration in England and Wales advised us that the base pay of the superintending ranks had also been reviewed. The steering group report set out the options it had considered and projected costs and re-endorsed a previous proposal to increase point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale by £5,675. The steering group's recommendation had been endorsed by the NPCC.

*Our comment and recommendation on the chief superintendent pay scale*

- 3.47 We have been invited to consider changes to the pay of the superintending ranks a number of times since 2019 when the SANI and PSA advocated an additional 'contributory pay point' at the top of each pay scale for superintendents and chief superintendents. We note that this is part of a series of reform measures that we have considered over the years and which resulted in the removal of the first pay point in the sergeant scale in 2020, and the raising of the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship minimum in England and Wales to pay point 0 in 2022. This year we are recommending the removal of pay point 0 of the constable pay scale which will raise the minimum starting salaries of new officers in advance of the review of constable base pay by the NPCC.
- 3.48 In our 2022 England and Wales Report, we explained that we wanted to consider the proposal on chief superintendent pay alongside the future pay reforms for chief officers. We are grateful to the steering group reviewing chief officer remuneration for explaining in detail to us how the work on superintending pay was taken forward in conjunction with work on chief officer pay to ensure logical differentials were created between ranks that

encouraged mobility and progression. We also note the steering group's endorsement of the proposal to increase pay point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale.

- 3.49 We considered carefully the arguments put forward in favour of the proposal. We accept that the responsibilities of the role have increased and that its pay is less competitive than for most other ranks. We recognise that there has been a substantial drop in the number of officers in the superintending ranks, particularly chief superintendents, in the period since 2011. We accept that the evidence from policing partners, our visits programme and the job-sizing exercise undertaken by Korn Ferry have demonstrated that: more work is being delegated to chief superintendents; that spans of control and supervision responsibilities have increased; and that chief superintendents have a heightened sense of personal liability, scrutiny and exposure.
- 3.50 We also note the levels of dissatisfaction with base pay expressed by chief superintendents and that the chief superintendent rank is the only rank where pay differentials diminish between the pay points. We also accept that there is a risk that the replacement of the Strategic Command Course and changes to the senior Police National Assessment Centre, which will enable more superintendents to apply for assistant chief constable posts, may lead in the longer term to the bypassing of the chief superintendent role if the rank does not appear attractive. We can see the value of ensuring that this critical senior operational rank remains attractive to experienced officers and incentivises applications from a diverse range of candidates.
- 3.51 We observe that the steering group supported the case to increase pay point 3 of the chief superintendent scale, not because of immediate concerns about recruitment to the rank but primarily in the interest of organisational justice and the employer's responsibility to reward the right amount in line with the role profile. However, we observe that the changes to the Strategic Command Course and the senior Police National Assessment Centre will increase the opportunities for the movement of superintendents into chief officer posts. While this should enable talented officers to move more quickly through the ranks and increase diversity at senior levels of the service, it may also place

additional recruitment pressure on the chief superintending rank. We judge that uplifting pay point 3 will enhance the salary of the service's top operational commanders, encouraging those who do not wish to progress to chief officer level to remain in the police service and preserve the attractiveness of this key operational role. We also note the steering group's conclusion that although increasing the top pay point of the chief superintendent rank by £5,675 would reduce the differential between chief superintendents and the first pay point of assistant chief constables to £8,176, there was a sufficient pay differential remaining to incentivise officers to progress.

3.52 Therefore, we observe that there are clear merits to addressing the anomalies in chief superintendent pay as set out in the steering group's report and on that basis accept that point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale should be uplifted by £5,675. We reflected carefully on the approach to implementing this change because we are concerned about the fact that many junior officers are struggling financially during the current economic climate. We therefore considered whether to adopt a similar approach to that which we are recommending for chief officers in England and Wales but we concluded that this was not possible for the implementation of this change. We also judge that the case for adjusting chief superintendent pay is different as the work that has been done to reevaluate the role of chief superintendents has demonstrated a significant change in the breadth of the job and level of responsibility. Furthermore, we are conscious that this proposal has been put forward to us a number of times in the last few years. We are keen to address this issue relatively quickly, given the proposed changes to the Strategic Command Course from June 2023 and the possible implications for the role of chief superintendent.

3.53 Consequently, we recommend that this change should be implemented over two years with £2,838 being added to pay point 3 in September 2023 and £2,837 in September 2024. These increases should be made before the application of the 2023/24 and 2024/25 pay awards.

**Recommendation 5. We recommend that point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale be uplifted by £2,838 from 1 September 2023 and £2,837 from 1 September 2024. These uplifts are to be made before the application of the respective pay awards for these years.**

## **Chief police officer pay and allowances**

### *Evidence from the parties*

- 3.54 The DOJ, PSNI, CPOSA and SANI highlighted that the pay rates of the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable in Northern Ireland were higher than those in England and Wales apart from in the Metropolitan Police Service. They explained that this was largely because of the security situation in Northern Ireland. The PSNI also observed that Police Scotland was an attractive destination for chief police officers because pay rates were higher there, while the DOJ pointed out that issues other than pay were barriers to recruitment and mobility.
- 3.55 We received the final report of the steering group of the chief officer remuneration review in England and Wales<sup>17</sup> this year. This centred on proposals to reduce the number of pay groups for chief constables from 12 to 3 and to set the pay of each deputy chief constable at 82.5% of their chief constable's pay rate.
- 3.56 The DOJ said that it was aware of the steering group report and of the headline pay figures proposed within it for the ranks of chief constable and deputy chief constable in England and Wales. It added that the rationale for the proposals was clear and that, while PSNI pay levels at the top two ranks was not significantly ahead, it was not planning to amend them. Both the DOJ and NIPB stated that the PSNI received a good pool of applicants at the most senior ranks despite the specific barriers to recruitment in Northern Ireland. The NIPB observed that in its forthcoming consideration of the final steering

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<sup>17</sup> Referred to hereafter as the steering group report.

group report it would focus on whether the PSNI chief constable and deputy chief constable package was still sufficient to attract good calibre applicants.

*Our comment and recommendations on chief constable and deputy chief constable pay*

- 3.57 We have accepted the proposals in the steering group report to reduce the number of pay groups for chief constables in England and Wales and to set the pay of deputy chief constables at 82.5% of chief constable pay. We judge that the impact of these changes on the morale of officers at other ranks will largely be determined by the way in which the proposals are implemented. The principle of fairness is central to our decision, both to chief officers, who play a vital leadership role in the police service, and to those they lead, many of whom are struggling financially and who are among those hit hardest by high inflation. Therefore, giving some chief constables and deputy chief constables in England and Wales a significant uplift to pay in addition to the full annual pay award we are recommending for other ranks would not be fair.
- 3.58 We therefore recommend a transitional arrangement for implementation that take places over at least three years, and in a way that avoids large windfall payments to individual chief officers. We have therefore recommended in 2023/24 that in England and Wales no chief constable or deputy chief constable receives more than the 7% increase we are recommending for the other police ranks and also recommend that all chief constables and deputy chief constables in England and Wales receive a pay award of 5%. Those officers in posts whose pay is being realigned as a result of the move from 12 pay groups to 3 will receive an additional award of up to 2% to begin the journey of moving those posts to the new pay rates for the three pay groups. The overall uplift received by those officers must not exceed 7%.
- 3.59 The pay points for the chief constable and deputy chief constable in Northern Ireland are separate from the pay structures for England and Wales forces. However, we judge that the differential between the two most senior ranks in Northern Ireland and those in England and Wales should remain the same. Therefore, we recommend that the Chief Constable in Northern Ireland should receive a pay award of 5%. We also recommend a consolidated increase of

6.4% to the PSNI deputy chief constable pay point from 1 September 2023 to set it at 82.5% of the chief constable pay point.

**Recommendation 6. In line with our 2023 England and Wales Report we recommend a consolidated increase of 5% to the PSNI chief constable pay point from 1 September 2023.**

**Recommendation 7. We recommend a consolidated increase of 6.4% to the PSNI deputy chief constable pay point from 1 September 2023 to set it at 82.5% of the chief constable pay point.**

*Assistant chief constable pay*

- 3.60 The CPOSA told us that it continued to support a review of pay for assistant chief constables as the rank carried a significantly increased level of risk, demand and responsibility. The CPOSA pointed out that it had previously suggested that assistant chief constable pay be directly linked to that of the chief constable, but it was also amenable to a more generic review of assistant chief constable pay. It emphasised its longstanding concerns about the pay of assistant chief constables in Northern Ireland who it stated carried greater responsibilities and levels of risk than many of their counterparts in England and Wales. The CPOSA called for the consequential impact on post-holders to be recognised. It added that another option would be to consider some form of allowance.
- 3.61 The report of the steering group overseeing the chief officer remuneration review in England and Wales clarified that the pay of assistant chief constables had been reviewed but that no changes were being proposed. The steering group also emphasised that the incremental pay structure of the assistant chief constable rank meant that in three years, their pay increased by around £13,000. In addition, its view was that the financial incentive to move from the chief superintendent rank to assistant chief constable, even

with the change it was proposing to point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale, was sufficient to encourage progression.

*Our comment on assistant chief constable pay*

3.62 We remain concerned about the assistant chief constable rank and that the review of chief officer remuneration included no proposal aimed at making the rank more attractive to potential applicants. We recall that in our 2022 report we welcomed the introduction of measures in Northern Ireland designed to reduce barriers to recruitment and looked forward to an update on the impact of these in the next pay round. We also judge that the number of applications for assistant chief constable roles across England, Wales and Northern Ireland should be closely monitored and a review should be conducted urgently by the NPCC to explore how to further increase the attractiveness of the role. Given these concerns, and our recommended increase to point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale, we conclude that a pay uplift of 7% for all assistant chief constables, in line with the federated and superintending ranks, is the most suitable approach this year.

*Our comment on the review of chief officer allowances*

3.63 The NIPB told us in 2019 that it had commissioned a review of chief officer allowances and that the resultant findings were recommended to the Minister of Justice in September 2020. These were: a reduction in chief officer car allowances<sup>18</sup> and the cessation of health insurance, broadband allowance and the proactive element of insurance cover. The NIPB advised us this year that it had received the Justice Minister's conclusions on the review in 2022 and that it was working through the implications of those and taking legal advice on next steps.

3.64 We observe that in our England and Wales report this year we press for improved transparency on the total pay and allowances of chief police officers. We have asked the NPCC to consider the implications for chief officer allowances arising from its planned review of allowances for the other ranks. In support of the principle of parity on pay and allowances we urge the

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<sup>18</sup> The PSNI advised us that the PSNI Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable did not receive Motor Vehicle Allowance. [NIEV5, page 30]

Northern Ireland policing parties to engage with the NPCC and others in this process.

### **The review of allowances**

3.65 The DOJ remit letter for 2023/24 advised us that the separate review of police officer allowances that it had commissioned was complete and being progressed through final approvals. It added that evidence regarding the outcome of the review would be provided to the PRRB in the course of both written and oral evidence.

3.66 The review covered the NITA, Dog Handlers' Allowance, CRTP, On-call Allowance and Motor Vehicle Allowance. It proposed:

- a phased approach to the removal of the CRTP over two years.
- limiting the enhanced £30 On-call Allowance rate currently paid on eight public holidays to just two (17 March and 12 July) and paying £20 on the remaining six.
- no changes to the current arrangements for the NITA, Motor Vehicle Allowances or the Dog Handlers' Allowance, or to the £20 rate for the On-call Allowance for evenings and weekends.

### *Our comment on the review of allowances*

3.67 As we explain further in the following sections, there were two areas where changes were proposed following the review of allowances (on CRTP and the On-call Allowance). However, we remain unclear on the outcome and request clarification as soon as possible.

3.68 On allowances, we uphold the principle of parity and define it as meaning that the same allowances should apply across the police forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is in recognition of the fact that the role of police officer is fundamentally the same across all three geographical areas. At the same time, we recognise the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions. This means that the NITA, which is unique to Northern Ireland, is the one allowance excluded from the parity principle. On all other allowances, the PSNI should plan for convergence with England and Wales.

- 3.69 We observe that the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) plans to conduct a review of police officer allowances in England and Wales in 2023/24. We urge the Northern Ireland parties to engage with this review and its outcomes to further the convergence process and in this way uphold the principle of parity.

### **Northern Ireland Transition Allowance**

- 3.70 Our remit letter from the DOJ asked for our consideration of the NITA.
- 3.71 The NITA is a non-pensionable allowance received by all police officers up to and including the rank of chief constable. Its current value is £3,666 per annum. It is a payment unique to PSNI police officers, in recognition of the fact that in Northern Ireland, police officers and their families must live with the constant threat of a terrorist attack and other adverse effects of the political context.
- 3.72 The review of allowances report commissioned by the DOJ concluded that the rationale for the NITA continued to apply. It observed that while progress had been made since 2006 in terms of the functioning of the democratic institutions, a number of the key indicators of a normalised security environment identified by the Baker Review of the Special Duty Allowance (now the NITA) of 2006<sup>19</sup> had clearly not yet been achieved.
- 3.73 The review of allowances proposed retention of the NITA at the present time and that the level of the payment should not change, subject to annual cost of living increases. It stated that the payment of the NITA and its value should be reviewed in light of any significant change to the terrorist threat level or significant advance or setback to the process of normalisation of the policing environment. In addition, the review of allowances said not just the terrorism threat level but also an assessment of progress towards normalisation of the

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<sup>19</sup> Police Service of Northern Ireland: *Special duty allowance – report of an independent review*, by Mark Baker CBE, March 2006.

policing environment should be taken into account, using the framework set down in the Baker Review<sup>20</sup>.

- 3.74 The review of allowances report advised that the Baker Review had said: ‘The Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance should not be fully withdrawn until responsibility for policing and the judicial system have been delegated to the democratic institutions of Northern Ireland, paramilitary attacks against police officers and establishments have ceased and the threats of violence have reduced substantially, access to difficult areas has been substantially eased, the post-Patten process of change has been completed, and PSNI officers are no longer required to carry side arms for self-protection or advised to disguise the nature of their occupation.’
- 3.75 The Justice Minister’s consultation letter to the parties in March 2022 following the review of allowances said that it appeared appropriate that the NITA should be retained, and paid at its current level, with an ongoing commitment to review this if relevant circumstances in Northern Ireland changed. It added that the NITA was unique to Northern Ireland and that consideration was also being given to removing it from the process of alignment to increases in annual uplifts.
- 3.76 In our 2022 report we asked the parties to provide evidence on the value of the NITA for 2023/24 in light of the review’s findings. All the parties proposed increasing it in line with the annual pay award.

*Our comment and recommendation on the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance*

- 3.77 We note that the security environment remains challenging and that the terrorist threat level has increased. On 28 March 2023, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced that the terrorism threat level in Northern Ireland had been raised from ‘SUBSTANTIAL’ to ‘SEVERE’, meaning that a

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<sup>20</sup> The Baker Review also said that ‘the NITA did not depend directly on the actual level of risk and danger. Instead, the justification was indirect and related to the difficulty and stress arising from having to live with, and mitigate, the terrorism threat...There was not a linear relationship between the danger of attack, the precautions needed to guard against attack, and the difficulties for officers and their families caused by such precautions.’ The Baker Review emphasised that the NITA ‘was paid in recognition of the extraordinary circumstances in which police officers operated in Northern Ireland and the restrictions placed on their daily lives, both on- and off-duty, and those of their family members’.

terrorist attack was now highly likely (instead of likely). In line with all parties' evidence, we recommend an uplift to the NITA of 7% in line with the 2023/24 pay award.

**Recommendation 8. We recommend an increase of 7% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) from 1 September 2023.**

### **Dog Handlers' Allowance**

- 3.78 Our DOJ remit letter also sought our consideration of the Dog Handlers' Allowance.
- 3.79 The review of allowances found that the Dog Handlers' Allowance was paid in line with England and Wales at a flat rate of £2,400 for the care of one dog and that compensation for each additional dog was £600 per annum. It explained that all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses associated with the care of dogs (for example, grooming and food) were paid for directly by the PSNI. It added that dog handlers in the PSNI were provided with a vehicle to transport the police dogs to and from work.
- 3.80 The review of allowances concluded that the allowance was paid for a valid purpose and stated that it appeared to be a reasonable and cost-effective means of providing essential care to police dogs.
- 3.81 The review of allowances report proposed retention of the Dog Handlers' Allowance at its current rate, subject to annual cost-of-living increases assessed by the PRRB. It observed that all stakeholders supported the continued payment of the allowance and increasing it in line with the pay award each year. The subsequent consultation letter to the parties from the Minister in March 2022 said there was a clear case to support the retention of the Dog Handlers' Allowance and that it should remain subject to annual review by the PRRB.
- 3.82 In our 2022 report we invited the parties to provide evidence this year on the value of the Dog Handlers' Allowance in light of the review's findings,

specifically in the Northern Ireland context. We made a similar request to the parties in England and Wales. In response, all the Northern Ireland parties proposed increasing it in line with the annual pay award.

*Our comment and recommendation on Dog Handlers' Allowance*

- 3.83 The NPCC has told us that the Dog Handlers' Allowance will be included in its plan to determine an appropriate review date for each allowance received by police officers. That work should consider whether the Dog Handlers' Allowance should continue to be uprated annually with the basic pay award. We expect clarity on this issue next year. For this year, we recommend that the Dog Handlers' Allowance be uplifted in line with the basic pay award. We also urge the Northern Ireland parties to engage with the NPCC review of allowances.

**Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Dog Handlers' Allowance is uprated by 7% from 1 September 2023.**

**Competence Related Threshold Payment**

- 3.84 The Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) was introduced in 2003 to recognise and reward officers able to demonstrate high professional competence under four national standards. It was phased out in England and Wales in 2016. It is worth £1,224, was last increased in September 2013 and is pensionable. The PSNI told us that on 31 December 2022, it was received by around 3,252 officers, or those in the federated ranks who had served for a year at the maximum of their pay scale and who satisfied the requirements of the scheme.
- 3.85 The scope for consideration of the CRTP in the DOJ-commissioned review of allowances was limited to options for its removal and replacement, with five options considered. These were: ceasing the CRTP with no replacement, or replacing it with one of the following: an Unsocial Hours Allowance; an extra pay point; a Targeted Variable Pay scheme; or a performance-related bonus payments scheme.

- 3.86 The review's preferred option was the replacement of the CRTP with a performance-related bonus payments scheme. It explained that, on balance, this would meet the objective of removing the CRTP and rewarding exceptional performance instead of time served. In addition, it would introduce a system for rewarding exceptional performance, which aligned with the direction of travel of the police service in the UK as a whole. Furthermore, the review stated that this proposal would maintain the same level of funding as the existing CRTP system, thereby avoiding potential industrial relations issues at a time when operational budgets were already subject to significant cuts.
- 3.87 The Justice Minister's subsequent consultation letter to the parties in March 2022 had said that it was important to remain mindful of the broad consensus that the CRTP should be removed. It acknowledged the potential hardship that its removal could have on individual officers and, with that in mind, proposed a phased approach to the removal of the CRTP over the next two years. The letter proposed closing the scheme to new applicants with immediate effect and a 50% reduction in the payment by 31 August 2023, with the remaining 50% removed by 31 August 2024.
- 3.88 This year the DOJ told us that while the direction of travel and ambition to remove the CRTP had not changed, the process for doing this had been affected by the political situation. The DOJ said it was currently preparing its advice on the matter to provide a definitive way forward and that it would explain the detail to the PRRB as soon as possible.
- 3.89 The PSNI told us that it had not received any guidance or direction in writing from the DOJ on the removal of the CRTP even though it had been advised that implementation would start in February 2023. The PSNI added that if it was instructed to follow a requirement for its removal or gradual phasing out, it would need time to consider implementation and the impact on pay and engage with the workforce. It added that it was aware that all alternatives proposed so far had failed on affordability grounds.

- 3.90 The NIPB told us that it was not averse to an alternative being put in place of the CRTP as long as it did not cost more. It added that it was happy to discuss alternatives but did not have the capacity or resources to devise one. The NIPB said that it recognised that removal of the CRTP would involve a level of hardship to officers.
- 3.91 The PFNI said in written evidence this year that its position on the CRTP had not changed, so while it opposed the removal of the CRTP, it reluctantly accepted the PRRB's position on the impact of its retention on parity. As in previous years, the PFNI asked for the CRTP to be increased in line with the pay award.
- 3.92 The PFNI said it rejected the possibility of the CRTP being removed in the absence of an appropriate replacement, such as the Unsociable Hours Allowance, and others. It observed that this would impact on pay during a cost-of-living crisis and that morale would be damaged just when demands on policing had increased and the reduction in police officer numbers was placing additional responsibilities on fewer officers.

*Our comment and recommendation on the Competence Related Threshold Payment*

- 3.93 We observe that it is seven years since the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) was phased out in England and Wales. Consequently, its continuation in Northern Ireland remains at odds with the definition of parity with England and Wales.
- 3.94 In our 2022 report we said we expected the parties to submit in evidence this year a clear process and timetable for its abolition. A two-year process culminating in complete removal of the CRTP by 31 August 2024 was set out in March 2022 and so we are unclear on the latest plan. We urge the parties to remove the CRTP but also address concerns about potential hardship to officers by engaging with the NPCC's review of allowances in England and Wales. In this way, the principle of parity on allowances will also be upheld. We ask to be kept closely updated on developments.

**Recommendation 10. We recommend that the current level of the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) does not increase and that, by 30 November 2023, the DOJ submits a full proposal with a firm timeline for the removal of CRTP and convergence with allowances in England and Wales, in the context of parity.**

### **On-call Allowance**

- 3.95 The DOJ-commissioned review of allowances culminated in a proposal to maintain the On-call Allowance for evenings and weekends at a rate of £20 but to limit the enhanced £30 On-call Allowance rate currently paid on eight public holidays to just two (17 March and 12 July) and to pay £20 on the remaining six.
- 3.96 The DOJ told us that the process to implement this change was being progressed.
- 3.97 The joint PSA/SANI written evidence requested a 5% increase to the On-call Allowance and that the payments become pensionable. In oral evidence the SANI set out the operational pressures and the impact on the personal lives of officers that it said lay behind its push for this increase.

### *Our comment on the On-call Allowance*

- 3.98 We had hoped to be updated on the implementation of the changes to the On-call Allowance proposed in the DOJ-commissioned review of allowances. In the interests of the parity principle, we suggest that the Northern Ireland parties link up with the forthcoming NPCC review of allowances, which is to include the On-call Allowance.

### **Mutual aid payments and allowances**

- 3.99 In 2022, the remit letter from the Minister of Justice requested our recommendations on the matter of mutual aid payments and allowances for police officers in Northern Ireland. It confirmed that the PSNI was the only UK police force with different arrangements in place. We then considered all the evidence presented to us comparing mutual aid payments and allowances in

Northern Ireland with those in England and Wales. This included the Away from Home Overnight Allowance and the 'proper' accommodation definition used for the Hardship Allowance. In accordance with the principle of parity on pay and allowances with England and Wales, we recommended in our 2022 report that the payment of PSNI officers providing mutual aid should be brought in line with the arrangements in England and Wales.

*Our comment on Mutual Aid payments and allowances*

3.100 We were pleased to learn this year that a Determination on Mutual Aid payments for PSNI officers had been implemented which brought arrangements in Northern Ireland in line with those in England and Wales. This development is in accordance with the principle of parity on allowances with England and Wales which states that on all allowances other than the NITA, the PSNI should plan for convergence with England and Wales. We ask the Northern Ireland parties to observe this principle by extending the process used for mutual aid payments to other areas of difference.

## **Chapter 4 – Forward Look**

### **Introduction**

- 4.1 It will be for Government to decide our remit for the next pay round. However, the core of our report will be driven by our standing terms of reference.
- 4.2 In this chapter we aim to give the evidence-providing parties, and the remit group more generally, an indication of the areas that we expect to be of particular interest to us in future pay rounds.

### **Engagement with parties**

- 4.3 We were grateful to receive written evidence from all our parties this year but we also regret that the PFNI did not attend an oral evidence session. This made our consideration of key issues more complex. We would have valued hearing directly from the PFNI on a wide range of matters, especially on the financial pressures facing its members. We hope to have full participation from all parties in 2024.

### **Changes to the policing environment**

- 4.4 We note that the security rating in Northern Ireland was increased to 'SEVERE' in March 2023. We seek evidence next year on the impact of the heightened security situation in Northern Ireland on police officer welfare and quality of life.
- 4.5 We would also like to learn more about the impact on the PSNI of its budgetary situation, including the effects of the concomitant recruitment pause and slowdown in promotions on diversity within the officer ranks. In addition, information on the financial impact on competing policing priorities in Northern Ireland will help us assess the affordability of pay recommendations. We would also like to hear how the PSNI's strategic plans for officer pay and reward have been affected by the financial situation.
- 4.6 At the time of writing, there had been no Northern Ireland Executive since 4 February 2022. We would like to be updated next year on the impact on the PSNI of this ongoing situation.

- 4.7 In addition, at the time of writing, inflation remained high, especially on food items. We are therefore keen to hear from the parties about the continuing impact of the cost of living on police officers, particularly in the federated ranks.

### **Parity with England and Wales**

- 4.8 As requested by all the parties, we have upheld the principle of parity with England and Wales on pay and allowances. We define parity as meaning the same basic pay scales and allowances across the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect the fact that the role of police officer is fundamentally the same across all three areas, while also recognising the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions.
- 4.9 We welcomed the introduction of new mutual aid payments in accordance with the principle of parity on pay and allowances with England and Wales. This states that on all allowances other than the NITA, the PSNI should plan for convergence with England and Wales. Therefore, in addition to extending the parity principle to the timing of the first constable pay increment in Northern Ireland, and asking the DOJ to update us by 30 November 2023 on the latest position on CRTP, we would like the principle to be applied to other areas of difference on pay and allowances. We therefore urge the parties to engage with the NPCC's forthcoming reviews of constable salaries, police officer allowances and the P-factor. We have asked the NPCC to provide us with a progress report on all three reviews by 30 November 2023. Furthermore, as the PSNI has expressed interest in using Targeted Variable Pay (TVP) in the areas of Derry and Strabane, we strongly suggest that it engages with the NPCC on the application of the regulations as they apply in England and Wales and future plans to make the regulation permanent.
- 4.10 We thank the parties for bringing the difference in maternity and adoption leave arrangements between Northern Ireland and England and Wales to our attention. We support the introduction of this proposed change in Northern Ireland and ask to be kept informed on developments. In our view, the principle of parity with England and Wales could extend to terms and

conditions of employment. We ask the Northern Ireland parties to explore this issue and respond to us next year.

### **Evidence provision**

4.11 We thank the parties for the evidence they have provided this year. We would encourage the continued, and where possible enhanced, provision of:

- historical data to allow time-series analysis on the demographics of the workforce, including the age profile of recruits;
- information on sickness absence and analysis of the reasons for high sickness absence levels;
- information on the recruitment and retention of officers such as on numbers of applicants and recruits, leavers and attrition, including during training;
- an update on levels of overtime taken, both pre-detailed and casual;
- an update on progress in response to the Deloitte report, the workforce profile and all protected characteristics;
- data on hard-to-fill posts;
- data on the morale and motivation of officers, such as from PSNI and PFNI surveys of officers;
- data on movements between the PSNI and other police forces, in particular with those in England and Wales, Police Scotland and An Garda Síochána;
- data on on-call duties and on untaken rest days;
- information on any matters with regard to the relevant legal obligations on the PSNI and any relevant legislative changes to employment law which do not automatically apply to police officers; and
- views on gender pay gap reporting.

### **Process issues**

4.12 We have recommended the introduction in Northern Ireland of a police regulation on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time. We expect prompt payment in 2023/24 of the pay award and annual increments for police officers. We seek an update in evidence next year on whether timely payment has been achieved.

4.13 We also express the hope that publication of our report will not be subject to delay.

## Appendix A – Our Previous Recommendations

### 2022 Report

We submitted our 2022 Report on 29 June 2022. The recommendations were as follows:

**Our 2022/23 recommendations (from 1 September 2022):**

- **A consolidated increase of £1,900 to all police officer pay points for all ranks.**
- **An increase of 5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA).**
- **An increase of 5% in the Dog Handlers' Allowance.**
- **That the current level of the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) does not increase and that in evidence next year the parties present a clear process and timetable for its abolition.**
- **That the payment of officers providing mutual aid is brought in line with England and Wales, including the Away from Home Overnight Allowance.**

The Department of Justice for Northern Ireland informed us in our remit letter of 3 February 2023 that the requisite approvals had concluded for the PRRB's recommendations on the pay award, the NITA and the Dog Handlers' Allowance. We also learned subsequently that our other recommendations had also been accepted.

### Previous recommendations

All of our previous recommendations, along with the responses<sup>21</sup> are set out below.

Report	Recommendation	Response
1 <sup>st</sup> (2015)	A consolidated increase of 1% to all pay points for federated and superintending ranks	Accepted
	No increase to the current level of Competence Related Threshold Payment	Accepted
	Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance to be uprated by 1%	Accepted
	Dog Handlers' Allowance to be uprated by 1%	Accepted
2 <sup>nd</sup> (2016)	A consolidated increase of 1% to all pay points for federated and superintending ranks	Accepted
	No increase to the current level of Competence Related Threshold Payment	Accepted

<sup>21</sup> Responses to the 2015, 2016, 2019 and 2020 and 2021 Reports were made by the Northern Ireland Minister of Justice. The 2017 and 2018 Reports were responded to by the Permanent Secretary at the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland in the absence of a Minister of Justice.

Report	Recommendation	Response
	Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance and Dog Handlers' Allowance to be uprated by 1%	Accepted
	No increase to the current level of the On-call Allowance	Accepted
3 <sup>rd</sup> (2017)	A consolidated increase of 2% to all pay points for federated and superintending ranks	Increased consolidated pay by 1% and, for 2017/18 only, provided a 1% non-consolidated pay award
	No increase to the current level of Competence Related Threshold Payment	Accepted
	Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance and Dog Handlers' Allowance to be uprated by 2%	Increased Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance and Dog Handlers' Allowance by 1%
	No increase to the current level of the On-call Allowance	Accepted
4 <sup>th</sup> (2018)	The time-limited 1% non-consolidated pay award received by the federated and superintending ranks in 2017/18 should be consolidated onto all pay points officers at these ranks.	Rejected
	In addition to and following our first recommendation, a consolidated increase of 2% to all police officer pay points at all ranks.	Accepted
	An increase of 2% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance and Dog Handlers' Allowance	Accepted
	The CRTP scheme remains open to new applicants pending the outcome of the comprehensive review and that the current level of CRTP does not increase	Accepted
5 <sup>th</sup> (2019)	A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officer pay points for all ranks.	Accepted for federated and superintending ranks. No response yet made regarding chief police officers
	An increase of 2.5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance.	Accepted
	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.	Accepted
	Dog Handlers' Allowance should increase by 2.5%.	Accepted
6 <sup>th</sup> (2020)	A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officer pay points for all ranks.	Accepted
	The Chief Constable of Northern Ireland should be granted the same discretion as chief constables in England and Wales regarding the starting salaries of constables.	Accepted
	Removal of the lowest point on the sergeants' pay scale.	Accepted

<b>Report</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Response</b>
	An increase of 2.5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance.	Accepted
	The current level of the Competence Related Threshold Payment should not increase and the parties submit proposals to us next year on suitable alternative arrangements.	Accepted
	Dog Handlers' Allowance should increase by 2.5%.	Accepted
	On-call Allowance should be extended to the superintending ranks in Northern Ireland.	Accepted
	The parties conduct a comprehensive review of police officer allowances in Northern Ireland within the next twelve months.	Accepted
7 <sup>th</sup> (2021)	Pay point 0 of the constable pay scale is uplifted by £250.	Accepted
	A 1% increase to the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance for all police officers.	Accepted
8 <sup>th</sup> (2022)	A consolidated increase of £1,900 to all police officer pay points for all ranks.	Accepted
	An increase of 5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA).	Accepted
	An increase of 5% in the Dog Handlers' Allowance.	Accepted
	That the current level of the Competence Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) does not increase and that in evidence next year the parties present a clear process and timetable for its abolition.	Accepted
	That the payment of officers providing mutual aid is brought in line with England and Wales, including the Away from Home Overnight Allowance	Accepted



## Appendix B – Remit Letter from the Department of Justice

**FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY  
RICHARD PENGELLY CB**



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Stormont Estate  
BELFAST BT4 3SG  
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email: richard.pengelly@justice-ni.gov.uk

Zoë Billingham  
Chair  
Police Remuneration Review Body  
Office of Manpower Economics  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Windsor House  
50 Victoria Street  
LONDON  
SW1H 0TL

3 February 2023

Dear Zoë

### **POLICE REMUNERATION REVIEW BODY REMIT FOR 2023/24**

First, I would like to thank the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for the work undertaken in support of the 2022/23 pay process.

I can confirm that the requisite approvals have now concluded for the following PRRB recommendations:

- a consolidated increase of £1,900 to all police officer pay points for all ranks;
- an increase of 5% in the current level of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA);
- an increase of 5% in the Dog Handlers' Allowance;

I can advise that I am content that the Northern Ireland report may now be published on your website.

I would be grateful if the PRRB would now commence its annual review in respect of officers of the PSNI for 2023/24, in conjunction with that for police officers in England and Wales.

I have had sight of the Home Secretary's remit letter for officers in England and Wales and note her position. The current policy position of the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland is to support the principle of broad alignment on police pay between the different jurisdictions. I am therefore seeking your consideration of the following:

- How to apply the pay award for 2023/24 for police officers in the PSNI.

Working in partnership to create a fair, just and safe community where we respect the law and each other.

- Consideration of the regular elements of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) and the Dog Handlers' Allowance.

I wish to advise that an independent Review of Allowances has now completed and is being progressed through final approvals. Evidence regarding the outcome of this review will be provided to the PRRB in the course of both written and oral evidence.

As in previous years, I would also invite you to have regard to PRRB's standing terms of reference. While the Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay Policy has not been set for 2023/24, it will be important to take this and wider affordability issues into consideration. Any recommendation for an award will rightly seek to recognise the valuable service that PSNI officers provide to the public, however this must be set in the context of the challenging UK economic position and significant budgetary pressures within the Northern Ireland public sector.

I can confirm that, pending formal publication of your report, stakeholders received a copy of the PRRB's last report, shared in confidence on 15 December 2022.

We would welcome receipt of your ninth report and recommendations by the end of June 2023. I look forward to working with you and your members in support of the process for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely



**RICHARD PENGELLY CB**

## **Appendix C – Summaries of the parties’ written evidence**

- C.1 We have set out below our summaries of the written evidence provided to us this year.

### **DOJ**

- C.2 The DOJ said that it had historically maintained an approach of broad consistency on PSNI pay awards with those in England and Wales to support interoperability between jurisdictions. It added that pay and other terms and conditions of PSNI officers were broadly consistent with those in England and Wales and that it wished to continue this approach. It observed that the principle that officers should be rewarded on a consistent basis for fulfilling their core role as officer, no matter which of the UK police forces they served within, remains.
- C.3 The DOJ set out the Northern Ireland context, including the security situation and recent terrorist incidents and confirmed that police and prison officers remained targets for terrorists. It also explained that community tensions arising from the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol had resulted in public protests and disorder and that there were risks associated with the continuing uncertainty around the Windsor Framework agreed by the UK and European Union (EU) to replace it.
- C.4 The DOJ outlined a range of initiatives in Northern Ireland to tackle paramilitary activity, criminality and organised crime. It observed that a primary legislative process and a fully functioning Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly were needed to progress some of this work.
- C.5 The DOJ explained that the cost-of-living crisis was having a profound impact on households and families facing significantly higher day-to-day costs on essential items such as food and energy. It pointed out that Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation stood at 10.1% in January 2023. It said that local forecasters were uncertain on how the economy would unfold in the coming months but that, in an extremely constrained fiscal environment, the Northern Ireland economy faced further challenges.

- C.6 The DOJ said that the public sector in Northern Ireland accounted for nearly 28% of employee jobs, compared with 17.6% in the UK as a whole. However, it advised treating such comparisons with caution given the different structure and coverage of the public sector workforces.
- C.7 The DOJ said that public sector pay was estimated to account for around 54% of the non-ring-fenced Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) budget. It added that in April 2022, Northern Ireland median gross full-time public sector employee earnings were £708 per week, which was 30% higher than the private sector equivalent (£544). It advised that this represented the smallest gap in 20 years. It reported that private sector weekly earnings increased by 7.3% over the year to April 2022, while public sector earnings increased by 3.1%. This meant that earnings had fallen in real terms (adjusted to take account of inflation) across all fulltime employees by 4.5% in Northern Ireland.
- C.8 The DOJ included a report on recent trends in public and private sector wages in Northern Ireland that the Department of Finance had commissioned. The findings indicated that Northern Ireland public sector wages were on par with other UK regions, apart from London. However, in contrast, Northern Ireland private sector wages were the lowest in the UK. The paper had noted analysis undertaken by the Institute for Fiscal Studies which found that headline public sector pay remained significantly higher than private sector pay, but that this differential was significantly reduced when controlled for workers' characteristics, such as working time, occupational structure, qualifications, and demographic factors. When taking these characteristics into account, the premium on Northern Ireland public sector pay on an hourly basis fell to approximately 10% for 2016-18 and was estimated to have fallen further since.
- C.9 The DOJ said that in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive a budget for 2023/24 had not been agreed. It described the impact of the 2022/23 Northern Ireland Budget on the PSNI, including a funding shortfall of around £80 million by March 2023, rising to £106 million in 2023/24 based on a flat 2022/23 rolled-forward budget.

- C.10 The DOJ said that the PSNI would receive additional security funding from HM Treasury each year between 2022 and 2025 but that this would leave the PSNI with an estimated shortfall in relation to security funding of £106 million in 2023/24. Tackling Paramilitarism funding was expected to remain at the 2022/23 level in 2023/24. In addition, the PSNI received funding to support the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The DOJ said that any reductions in funding would impact on neighbourhood policing in critical areas and leave the PSNI unable to carry out its functions effectively in relation to the administration of the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- C.11 The DOJ said the PSNI had already taken steps to reduce police officer and staff numbers to reduce costs and that the police service, in the absence of additional funding, would shrink over the next three years. It said that by March 2023 it would have 6,667 full time officers and that with 311 fewer police officers and 115 staff, this represented a reduction of nearly 6%. It pointed out that this was approximately 800 fewer officers than the commitment made in the New Decade, New Approach Agreement and the lowest officer numbers since the PSNI was formed. It added that this reduction came at a time when the population was growing and crime rising.
- C.12 The DOJ added that following the review of allowances the Minister of Justice had approved some changes following a consultation exercise with policing stakeholders. It said the changes were progressing through DOJ and Department of Finance approvals and that the PRRB would be informed when the approvals had concluded.

## **NIPB**

- C.13 The NIPB said it supported the principle of parity with police officers in England and Wales on the base pay award. It also said consideration should be given to making available to PSNI officers any other allowances and arrangements currently available to police officers in England and Wales, such as 26 weeks' maternity and adoption leave.
- C.14 The NIPB said it had been asked not to reference the DOJ-led review of police officer allowances but clarified that it wanted the outcome of the review

to achieve parity with England and Wales. The NIPB added that while it recognised the issue of affordability and the need to align with the Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay Policy it was steadfast in its view that there should be no divergence on pay and allowances between the PSNI and England and Wales, apart from on specific local allowances, such as the NITA and London weighting.

- C.15 The NIPB explained that the PSNI faced increasingly complex demand. It added that the crime rate had increased more than 13% on the previous financial year and was the highest for 12 years.
- C.16 The NIPB stated that PSNI officers performed an extremely challenging role against a backdrop of increased assaults and attacks and a worrying trend in terrorist activity. It said that the particularly brutal recent attack on a senior officer had been felt throughout the service. It also cited an increase in the number of assaults on police officers.
- C.17 The NIPB added that police officer and staff starting salaries should be attractive and comparable with other professions and observed that pay and conditions in Police Scotland were more favourable. It also stated that the prohibition on police officers taking strike action should be taken into account in their pay and allowances.
- C.18 The NIPB expressed concern at the fall in the number of police staff and officers resulting from the PSNI's financial situation. It said that despite the political commitment figure of 7,500, the PSNI would lose 800 officers by 31 March 2023 and potentially reach 6,000 officers by March 2025. The NIPB warned that this would mean less visible policing, slower response times, a more reactive service and a compromised ability to deal with the unexpected. It also expressed concern at the resultant pressures placed on remaining officers and staff.
- C.19 The NIPB stressed that the risks involved in underfunding the police were particularly critical. It pointed out the impact of this on efforts to have a service representative of the Northern Ireland community which it saw as critical to

confidence in policing and to service legitimacy. It would also affect efforts to transform policing.

- C.20 The NIPB said that, because of the cost-of-living crisis, around 900 PSNI officers had a second job or outside business interest. Furthermore, a local PSNI policing survey found that 95% of respondents were concerned about the cost of living, especially the cost of vehicle fuel (86%) and household bills (82%). Subsequently, the PSNI had set up a cost-of-living Gold Group.
- C.21 The NIPB stated that it was particularly concerned about the increase in police recruits leaving the service: 49 probationary constables had left in the last financial year, up from 25 during the previous 12 months. The additional demands placed on officers were seen as a primary cause of this. The NIPB also welcomed the increase in starting salaries (up from pay point 0 to pay point 1) for new PSNI officers from April 2023.

## **PSNI**

- C.22 The PSNI said it knew that its challenging budgetary position would have a profound impact on the shape of policing in Northern Ireland. It said that in the context of the absence of a functioning Northern Ireland Executive and ongoing uncertainty around the Protocol and Windsor Framework the PSNI was working on an operating shortfall of £226 million over the next three years to stand still (based on a draft three-year budget).
- C.23 The PSNI said that the wider cost of living crisis and the ability of other public sector or emergency services to take industrial action over pay meant it faced unique challenges from continuing political instability and Northern Ireland-specific factors relating to threat, risk and harm to PSNI officers.
- C.24 The PSNI emphasised, in the context of the wider cost-of-living crisis and increasing terrorist threats, that its officers only received the 2022/23 pay award at the end of February 2023. In addition, incremental progression had not yet been disaggregated from the pay award to avoid further delays and financial hardship. Furthermore, the number of business interest applications from officers seeking additional income from outside the PSNI had recently increased.

- C.25 The PSNI added that recommendations from the DOJ-led review of allowances had not yet been implemented.
- C.26 The PSNI explained that its focus remained on keeping police officers, police staff and the wider community safe. It said that the significant events posing threat, risk and actual harm to officers along with the recent attempted murder of Detective Chief Inspector Caldwell were a stark reminder that the security threat to police officers endured.
- C.27 The PSNI added that a decision to maintain a level of recruitment, rather than a recruitment freeze, would give an establishment figure of 6,699 police officers at 31 March 2023. It said that this reduction in numbers would increase the workloads of remaining officers and generate significant operational policing challenges to adversely affect service delivery, recruitment, retention and police officer morale.
- C.28 The PSNI emphasised that it was an armed service dealing with a substantial terrorist threat to officers. It observed that it policed the UK's only land border with the EU but was unable to rely on surges of operational support from neighbouring police services when there were terrorist incidents. The PSNI stressed that it faced unique challenges and should be resourced accordingly.

## **PFNI**

- C.29 The PFNI criticised the pay review process. It said that in the nine years since the PRRB's inception the process had lacked independence and impartiality and that its persistent shortcomings had eroded officers' trust. It stated that it wanted to put on record its dismay, anger and disillusionment with the current pay process. It added that many of its members had stopped expecting any tangible recognition for their unique role and responsibilities, the very real threat to their personal safety and the restrictions placed on their private and professional lives.
- C.30 The PFNI emphasised the inability of police officers to join a trade union or take industrial action and said that this intensified the need for an impartial, balanced and unprejudiced process. It added that officers looked across the public sector and saw their counterparts in the fire service, health and

education taking industrial action and achieving better pay awards. The PFNI said members consequently did not feel properly valued and instead were being treated with disdain.

- C.31 The PFNI also raised its concern at delays for the sixth year running in decision-making on PRRB recommendations and in the implementation of officers' contractual, incremental payments. It highlighted the impact of these delays on officer morale and the practical implications, especially when the cost of living was high.
- C.32 The PFNI made six main proposals in its written evidence:
- A universal percentage pay award of 17% reflecting pay parity in England and Wales and uplifts to the NITA, Dog Handlers' Allowance and CRTP in line with this.
  - The introduction of an Unsocial Hours Allowance and other allowances as received in England and Wales should CRTP be phased out.
  - A 5% increase to the On-call Allowance and for it to be made pensionable.
  - An increase in annual leave entitlement.
  - An increase in the fully paid maternity and adoption leave entitlement from 18 weeks to 26 weeks in line with England and Wales.
  - The reintroduction of overtime payments or a non-pensionable supplement for the inspecting ranks.
- C.33 The PFNI said it agreed with the PRRB definition of pay parity.
- C.34 The PFNI set out the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on PSNI officers and the financial pressures arising from factors such as the impact of inflation on energy, food and transport costs and mortgage and rental payments.
- C.35 The PFNI also described the impact on individuals of the security situation in Northern Ireland, the recent terrorist attacks on PSNI officers and the threat made to their families.
- C.36 On police pay, the PFNI said that the pay award had to take into account the recent growth in inflation, increasing pay awards elsewhere, and the recent degradation of police pay as well as the impact of all this on officer morale,

motivation and organisational commitment. It explained that this was why it was proposing for 2023/24 an equal percentage pay award across all ranks of 17% (CPI plus an additional 1%) and to reflect pay parity with England and Wales.

- C.37 The PFNI said that police officers had suffered a 28.7% real-terms pay cut in the last decade. It also set out the findings of an independent research report by the Social Market Foundation showing that police pay had declined by 17% in real terms between 2000 and 2022. The report set out that police pay was an outlier among other protective services workers, public sector workers and all workers, as these groups had all experienced real-terms pay rises over the same period. The report had suggested that the restriction on the right to strike for police officers had put them at a disadvantage in comparison with all other workers, including other emergency workers.
- C.38 The PFNI said that the study also found that police constable starting salaries had lagged behind earnings as a whole across the economy by a considerable amount. Furthermore, it highlighted that if the pay trend continued over the next five years, police pay would fall a further 4% in real terms by 2027. In addition, the report highlighted that police pay had risen barely half the rate of an average UK employee across the same period.
- C.39 The PFNI said it was ‘perplexed’ by the DOJ-led review of allowances and that it regarded it as the role of the PRRB to review and come to informed decisions on PSNI officers’ pay, terms and conditions. It regretted that the DOJ-commissioned review had not focused on the integral importance of the relevant allowances to the officers in receipt or the emotional value and historical importance of the NITA.
- C.40 The PFNI said that there was no clarity on the likely police budget in 2023/24 but that indications were that the PSNI faced a ‘bleak’ financial situation. It said that a flat budget would give rise to a funding gap of £106 million in 2023/24 that could be reduced to £50 million with the implementation of cuts, including to recruitment. The PFNI feared budget cuts of between £176 million (23%) and £206 million (26%) on non-ringfenced DEL at March 2022 of £781

million. It said that the police budget was at breaking point and could mean up to 1,000 fewer officers over the next three years, which would take officer headcount closer to 6,000 than the 7,500 figure in New Decade, New Approach and the Patten Commission report. The PFNI added that without significant budgetary investment the PSNI would face a shrinking service and have to make stark choices on prioritising remaining resources. The PFNI said that, without mitigation, the PSNI would almost certainly become smaller, less visible, accessible and responsive.

### **SANI and PSA**

C.41 The SANI expressed disappointment that none of its points had been included in the DOJ remit letter.

C.42 The SANI sought recommendations on the following:

- Maintaining pay parity with police officers in England and Wales in respect of core pay scales.
- An increase in pay scales and the NITA in line with the cost of living. The SANI stressed that officers were not able to live a normal life due to the fear of being targeted by terrorists.
- Payment for rest days and public holidays that could not be taken due to the exigencies of duty, and an extension of their availability to 24 months. The SANI explained that its members' workloads had increased because of lost rest days owed and reductions in superintending rank numbers. It stated that stress and mental health issues had affected members' wellbeing resulting in sickness absences. The SANI said that its members were being denied the recuperation time they needed in the unique policing environment of Northern Ireland.
- After applying the annual pay award, an increase of £5,675 to chief superintendent pay point 3 in recognition of increased responsibility similar to chief officer rank. The SANI said the increase it had seen in members leaving to join other forces on improved terms would only intensify if they were not treated equitably.

C.43 The SANI emphasised the following results from the December 2022 pay survey of the superintending ranks in England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- 56% of respondents were dissatisfied with their overall remuneration, a 6% increase compared with the 2021 survey.
- 58% of respondents reported lower personal morale compared with 12 months earlier (compared with 49% in the 2021 survey).
- 84% of respondents disagreed that pay increases maintained their standard of living, compared with 74% in 2021.

C.44 The SANI also submitted joint evidence with the PSA. This described the concept of procedural justice which they asserted the PRRB did not deliver. They also set out the results of a survey of perceptions of the PRRB:

- Just under a quarter of respondents (23%) said that they were not at all aware of how the PRRB process worked.
- 68% said that they were somewhat aware and just 11% said that they were very aware of how the process worked.
- A majority of respondents (62%) felt the PRRB process was either unfair, in contrast with just 4% who felt it was either fair, or very fair, in 2021 (22% in 2018).
- 75% of respondents felt the pay awards resulting from the PRRB process were unfair, compared with 1% who felt they were fair.

C.45 The SANI and PSA also pointed out that sectors that could strike had secured better pay deals.

C.46 The SANI and PSA set out the pay degradation relative to CPI inflation that had occurred for the superintending ranks since 2010 and the suppression of superintending pay by between 9.3 and 9.9%. It stated that there had been a 17% real-terms cut in police pay since 2010. The SANI and PSA cited results from its 2022 Pay Survey:

- 45% of respondents were dissatisfied with basic pay, compared with 37% in 2021.
- 84% disagreed that they received pay increases to maintain their standard of living, compared with 74% of respondents in 2021.

C.47 The survey also looked at factors influencing officers who were planning to leave the service before they were able to draw their pension. The factors that respondents indicated had a major effect were:

- pay and benefits (59%);
- pension (66%) and uncertainty regarding pension (59%);
- impact of job on family and personal life (66%);
- impact of job on health and wellbeing (63%); and
- better opportunities outside the police (63%).

C.48 With regard to a pay award for 2023, the SANI and PSA stated that anything less than the rate of inflation (CPI) would compound the real-terms decline in pay. They told us that they only supported a pay award in the form of a percentage pay increase across all ranks. They observed that a flat rate penalised long-serving officers.

C.49 The SANI and PSA Pay Survey 2022 showed an increase in the proportion of respondents dissatisfied with the value of allowances. The SANI and PSA requested a 5% increase to On-call Allowance and asked that payments be made pensionable. The SANI and PSA explained the operational importance of the allowance to the police service and said that it was a cost-effective way of the police service providing cover. They said their latest survey revealed that 93% of superintendents provided cover outside core hours.

C.50 On the Motor Vehicle Allowance, the SANI and PSA pointed out that there had been no increase in rates for mileage since 2016. They described the Essential Users' Allowance and pointed out that it had not been reviewed since 2010 in spite of significant increases in the cost of motoring. It also set out the results of the 2021 SANI and PSA Pay Survey regarding use of vehicles.

C.51 The SANI and PSA supported proposals for an uplift to pay point 3 of the chief superintendent pay scale and provided detailed responses to the concerns raised in the PRRB's 2022 England and Wales report. The SANI and PSA challenged the assumption that the lack of a problem with recruitment negated the need for an increase to pay point 3. They stressed that the only

way officers could ensure pay kept pace with inflation was to seek promotion. They asserted that a failure by the PRRB to make a recommendation would be evidence of the PRRB's bias against high earners.

## **CPOSA**

C.52 The CPOSA Northern Ireland sought a position of no detriment for its members compared with chief police officers in England and Wales.

C.53 It sought the following:

- Continued pay parity, including allowances, with England and Wales. The CPOSA said it did not wish to see pay and allowances in Northern Ireland deviate from this to the detriment of its members.
- Any pay award made to officers in England and Wales to be mirrored in Northern Ireland.
- Continued incremental pay progression.
- Retention of the NITA and the increase to it in line with the pay award.

C.54 In addition, the CPOSA sought a review of the pay of assistant chief constables which the Senior Salaries Review Body had previously agreed. The CPOSA said that certain assistant chief constable posts across the UK, including all those in Northern Ireland, carried a significantly higher level of risk, demand and responsibility. It added that it had suggested linking assistant chief constable pay to the chief constable's but that it was also amenable to a more generic review of assistant chief constable pay.

## Appendix D – The Parties’ Website Addresses

The parties’ written evidence should be available through these websites.

Department of Justice Northern Ireland	<a href="https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/">https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/</a>
Northern Ireland Policing Board	<a href="https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/">https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/</a>
Police Service of Northern Ireland	<a href="https://www.psn.i.police.uk/">https://www.psn.i.police.uk/</a>
Police Federation for Northern Ireland	<a href="https://www.policefed-ni.org.uk/">https://www.policefed-ni.org.uk/</a>
Superintendents’ Association of Northern Ireland	<a href="https://policesupers-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/p/wtr/EW80LboyVL5HnQ7U9uVIs88B_5oJMAiT1vLGiPVREIX83A?e=3r9o1S">https://policesupers- my.sharepoint.com/:b:/p/wtr/EW80LboyVL5HnQ7U9uVIs8 8B_5oJMAiT1vLGiPVREIX83A?e=3r9o1S</a>
Chief Police Officers’ Staff Association	<a href="https://cposa.uk/">https://cposa.uk/</a>



## Appendix E – Our Analysis of Earnings and Workforce Data

### Earnings

- E.1 We examined the earnings<sup>22</sup> of police officers using the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and the Police Earnings Census run by the Home Office. ASHE is a sample survey, published in autumn each year, which provides headline earnings estimates for occupations across the economy; for police officers the Standard Occupational Classification produces figures jointly for constables and sergeants and, separately, for the grouping of more senior ranks. The Police Earnings Census, conducted in its present form since the financial year ending (FYE) 2011, covers all police officers and permits detailed earnings analysis. The data provide a useful insight into the range of earnings received within and across ranks, and the take-up and value of individual pay components.
- E.2 We used the ASHE data to compare median<sup>23</sup> full-time<sup>24</sup> gross annual earnings of police officers (constables and sergeants) with those of: the whole economy; associate professional occupations group (the occupational group which includes police officers); and professional occupations (which tend to be graduate professions). From our analysis (Chart E.1) we conclude that police officers in Northern Ireland have higher median full-time gross annual earnings compared with counterparts in England and Wales, approximately £49,700 compared with £43,800 respectively in FYE 2022; this was primarily driven by the NITA, higher amounts of overtime, and the retention of the CRTP scheme. Moreover, police officers in Northern Ireland have higher median full-time gross annual earnings compared with workers in Northern Ireland in the wider economy and the other occupational groups shown.

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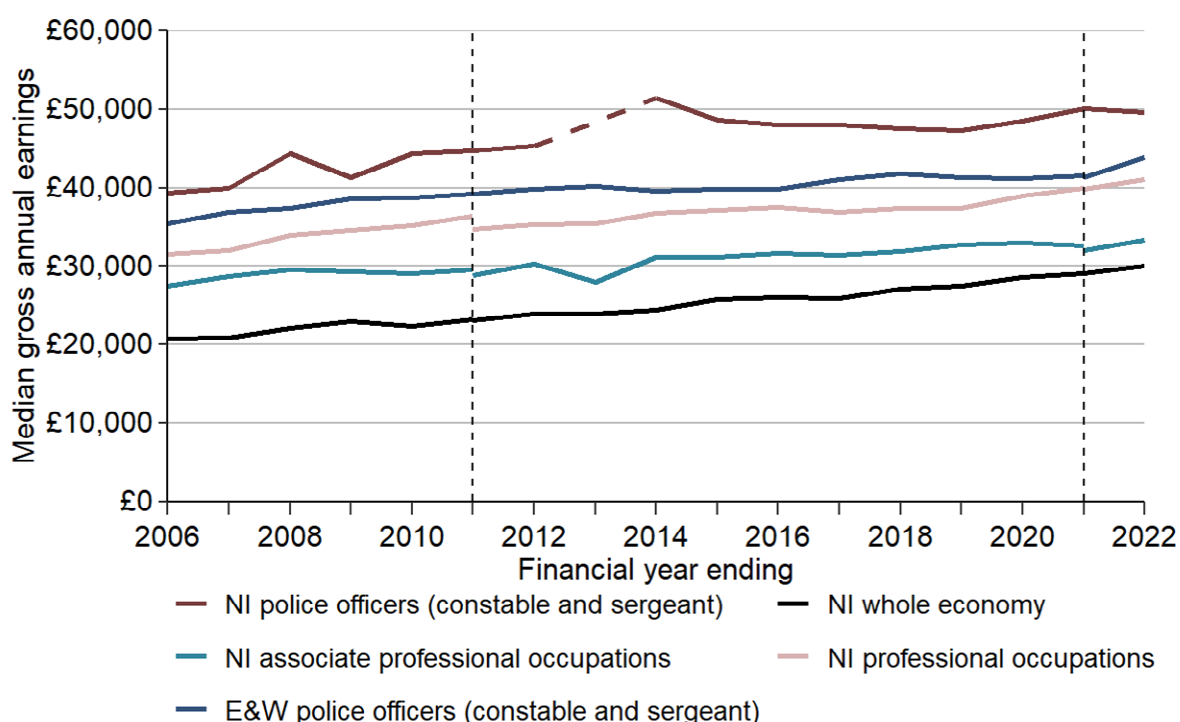
<sup>22</sup> Earnings include basic pay and additional pay from overtime and allowances. Earnings are presented in terms of gross pay (that is before tax, National Insurance and other deductions) in current prices unless otherwise stated.

<sup>23</sup> The median is the value below which 50% of workers fall. It gives a better indication of typical pay than the mean as it is less affected by a relatively small number of very high earners and the skewed distribution of earnings.

<sup>24</sup> Full-time earnings are used to control for any differences caused by different mixes of full- and part-time workers over time and between occupations.

E.3 We note that median full-time gross annual earnings of police officers in Northern Ireland in FYE 2022 decreased by 0.9% (around £500), compared with FYE 2021. Across England and Wales, median full-time gross annual earnings for police officers rose by 6.0% (£2,500). Median full-time gross annual earnings in Northern Ireland rose by 3.2% (£900) for the whole economy, 3.1% (£1,200) for professional occupations, and 4.2% (£1,400) for associate professional occupations.

**Chart E.1: Median full-time gross annual earnings, Northern Ireland and England & Wales, FYE 2006 – 2022**



Source: OME analysis of ASHE, Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

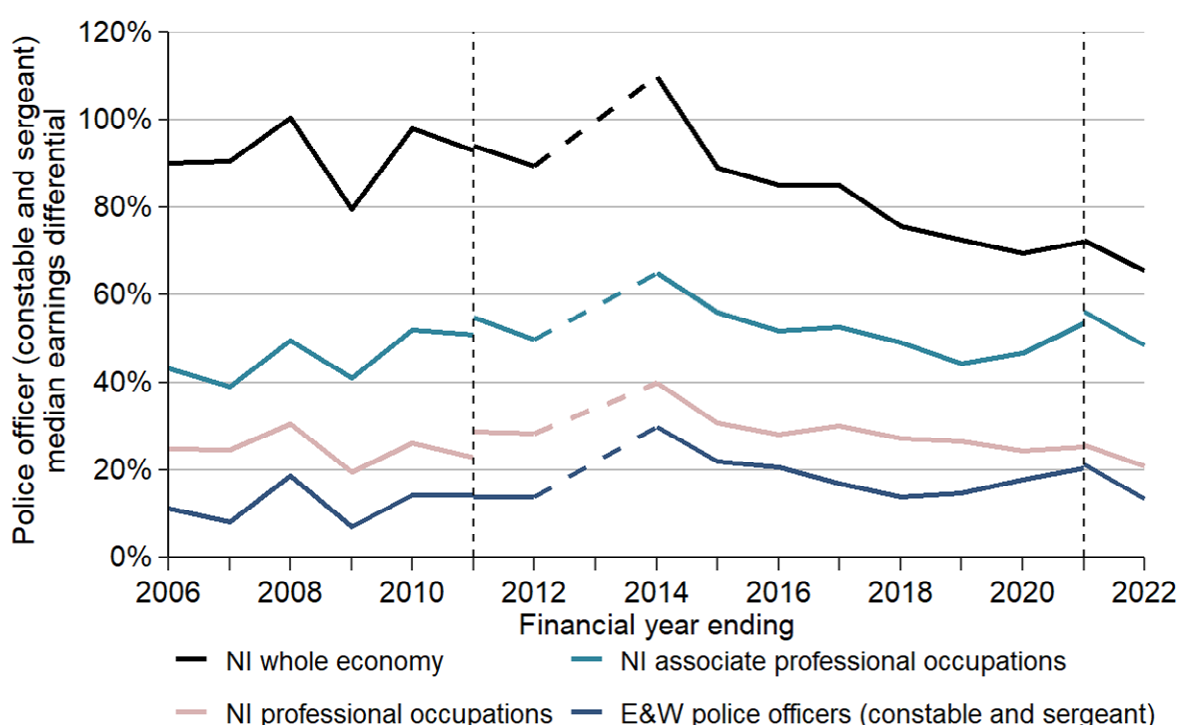
Notes:

- There are discontinuities in the series due to changes to the Standard Occupational Classification (in FYE 2011).
- Data for the latest year are provisional.
- Data for Northern Ireland police officers are not available for FYE 2013 due to a small sample size.

E.4 Our analysis included looking at the differentials between police officer earnings in Northern Ireland and the earnings of other groups (Chart E.2). These differentials all fell in FYE 2022. In FYE 2022, median full-time gross annual earnings for police officers in Northern Ireland were:

- 66% (£19,700) higher than those for the whole economy in Northern Ireland;
- 49% (£16,200) higher than associate professional occupations in Northern Ireland;
- 21% (£8,600) higher than professional occupations in Northern Ireland; and
- 13% (£5,800) higher than police officers in England and Wales.

**Chart E.2: Differentials between Northern Ireland police officer full-time median gross annual earnings and those of other groups, FYE 2006 – 2022**



Source: OME analysis of ASHE, ONS and NISRA.

Notes:

– There are discontinuities in the series due to changes to the Standard Occupational Classification (in FYE 2011).

– Data for the latest year are provisional.

– Data for Northern Ireland police officers are not available for FYE 2013 due to a small sample size.

E.5 For a detailed analysis of police earnings we used the latest available Police Earnings Census data (covering FYE 2022). We found that inspector, superintendent and chief superintendent were the only ranks in Northern Ireland where fewer than half of officers were at the top of their pay scale (Table E.1). This means that median basic pay is around the top of the pay scale for all other ranks.

**Table E.1: Proportion of officers (full- and part-time) at the top of pay scales, Northern Ireland and England & Wales, March 2022**

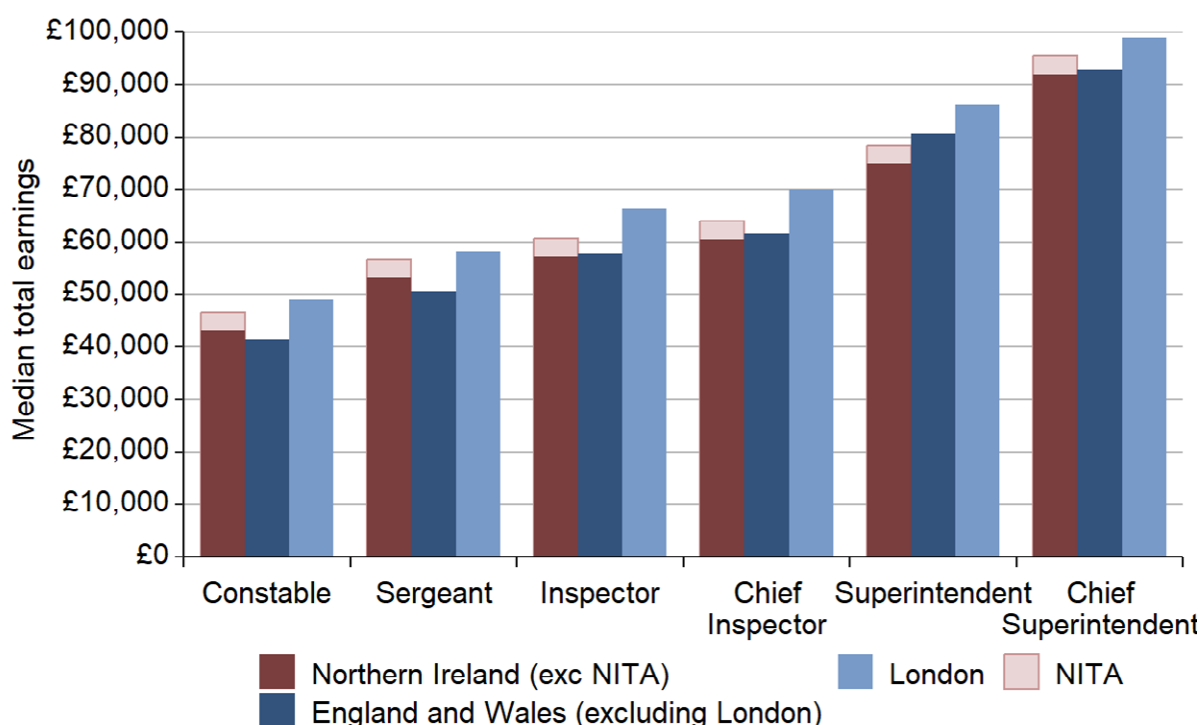
	Northern Ireland	England & Wales
Constable	59%	54%
Sergeant	57%	62%
Inspector	44%	50%
Chief Inspector	57%	49%
Superintendent	30%	37%
Chief Superintendent	39%	54%

Source: OME analysis of Police Earnings Census data, Home Office.

E.6 When comparing the total earnings of Northern Ireland police officers with those of their counterparts in England and Wales we show earnings figures including and excluding the NITA. We focus our analysis on the comparison excluding the NITA, as this allowance is paid to police officers in Northern Ireland in acknowledgement of the challenging policing environment and the restrictions faced by officers and their families.

E.7 Our analysis shows that constables and sergeants were the only ranks with higher median full-time total earnings (excluding the NITA) than their counterparts in England and Wales excluding London (Chart E.3). The higher earnings for these ranks in Northern Ireland (around £1,600 and £2,600 higher respectively) are mainly as a result of higher levels of overtime worked and the retention of CRTP. The lower median earnings for superintendents in Northern Ireland (by around £5,800) are as a result of differences in the distribution of superintendents on their pay scale.

**Chart E.3: Median total earnings, by rank, full-time officers, Northern Ireland and England & Wales, FYE 2022**



Source: OME analysis of Police Earnings Census data, Home Office.

E.8 Our assessment of police earnings includes the proportion of full-time officers in Northern Ireland in receipt of specific allowances and overtime (Table E.2) and the median annual values of those payments for those officers who were in receipt of the particular payments (Table E.3). Our key observations include:

- All police officers received the NITA;
- The proportion in receipt of CRTP ranged from 31% of chief inspectors to 56% of sergeants;
- The vast majority of constables and sergeants (94% and 95% respectively) received overtime. Median overtime earnings in Northern Ireland were around 75% higher than those in England and Wales;
- The proportion of officers in receipt of Replacement Allowance (available to officers who joined before September 1994) increased with rank from 6% of constables to 51% of superintendents; and
- The proportion of officers receiving On-call Allowance also increased with rank from 10% of constables to 36% of chief inspectors. However, the

median values were low – equivalent to three periods (or two bank holiday periods) for each rank.

**Table E.2: Percentage of full-time officers in receipt of additional pay components, by rank, Northern Ireland, FYE 2022**

	Constable	Sergeant	Inspector	Chief Inspector	Supt.	Chief Supt.
NITA	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Replacement Allowance	6%	14%	19%	27%	51%	–
CRTF	54%	56%	40%	31%	–	–
On-call Allowance	10%	18%	24%	36%	–	–
Overtime	94%	95%	–	–	–	–
Other payments (e.g. Dog Handlers', secondment allowances)	1%	–	–	–	–	–

Source: OME analysis of Police Earnings Census data, Home Office.

Note: Percentages relating to fewer than 10 officers are suppressed.

**Table E.3: Median value of additional pay components, full-time officers in receipt of relevant payments, by rank, Northern Ireland, FYE 2022**

	Constable	Sergeant	Inspector	Chief Inspector	Supt.	Chief Supt.
NITA	£3,477	£3,477	£3,477	£3,477	£3,477	£3,477
Replacement Allowance	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500	£4,060	–
CRTF	£1,224	£1,224	£1,224	£1,224	–	–
On-call Allowance	£60	£60	£60	£60	–	–
Overtime	£4,477	£6,893	–	–	–	–
Other payments (e.g. Dog Handlers', secondment allowances)	£2,400	–	–	–	–	–

Source: OME analysis of Police Earnings Census data, Home Office.

Note: Estimates relating to fewer than 10 officers are suppressed.

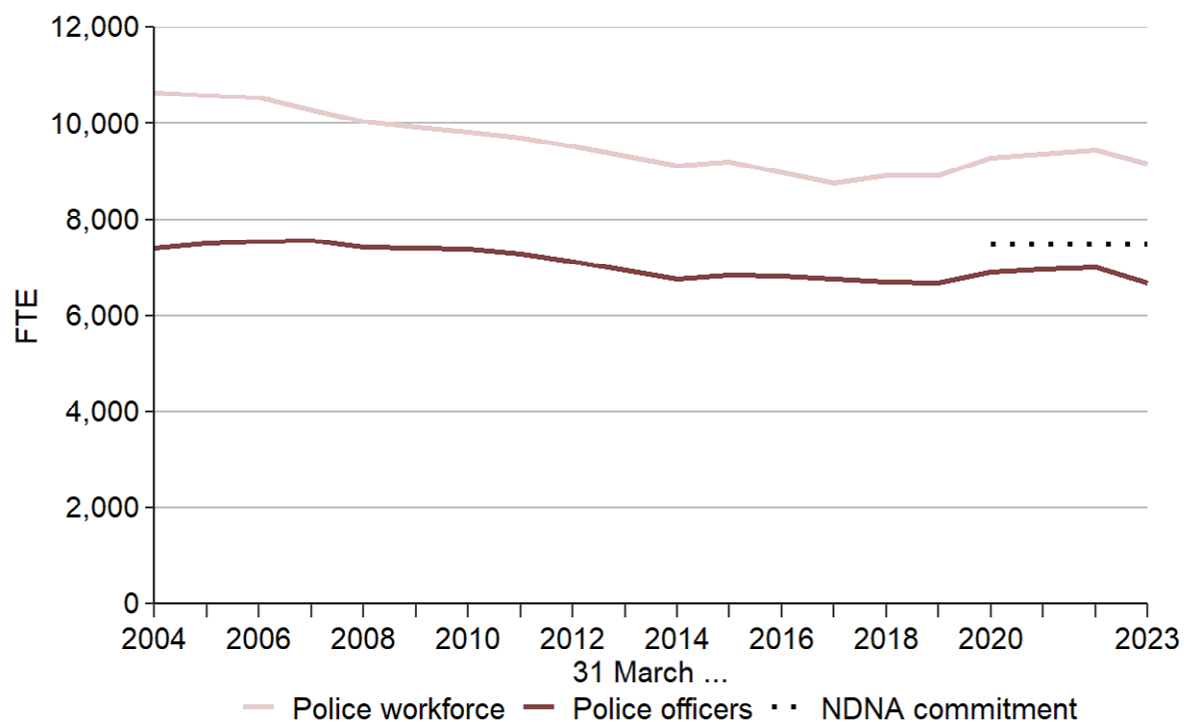
## PSNI workforce

E.9 Data provided by the PSNI (Chart E.4) show that the full-time equivalent (FTE) police workforce (i.e. both officers and permanent support staff) shrank nearly every year between March 2004 (the earliest year for which we have data) and March 2017, grew most years between March 2017 and March 2022, but fell in the latest year. In March 2023 the overall workforce was around 9,150. This was 1,500 FTE (14%) lower than in March 2004 but 400 FTE (5%) higher than March 2017.

E.10 Police officers account for around three-quarters of the PSNI workforce. Officer numbers fell in most years between March 2007 and March 2019, and again in the latest year. In March 2023 there were around 6,700 FTE officers,

similar to the number in March 2019 but 880 FTE (12%) fewer than in March 2007.

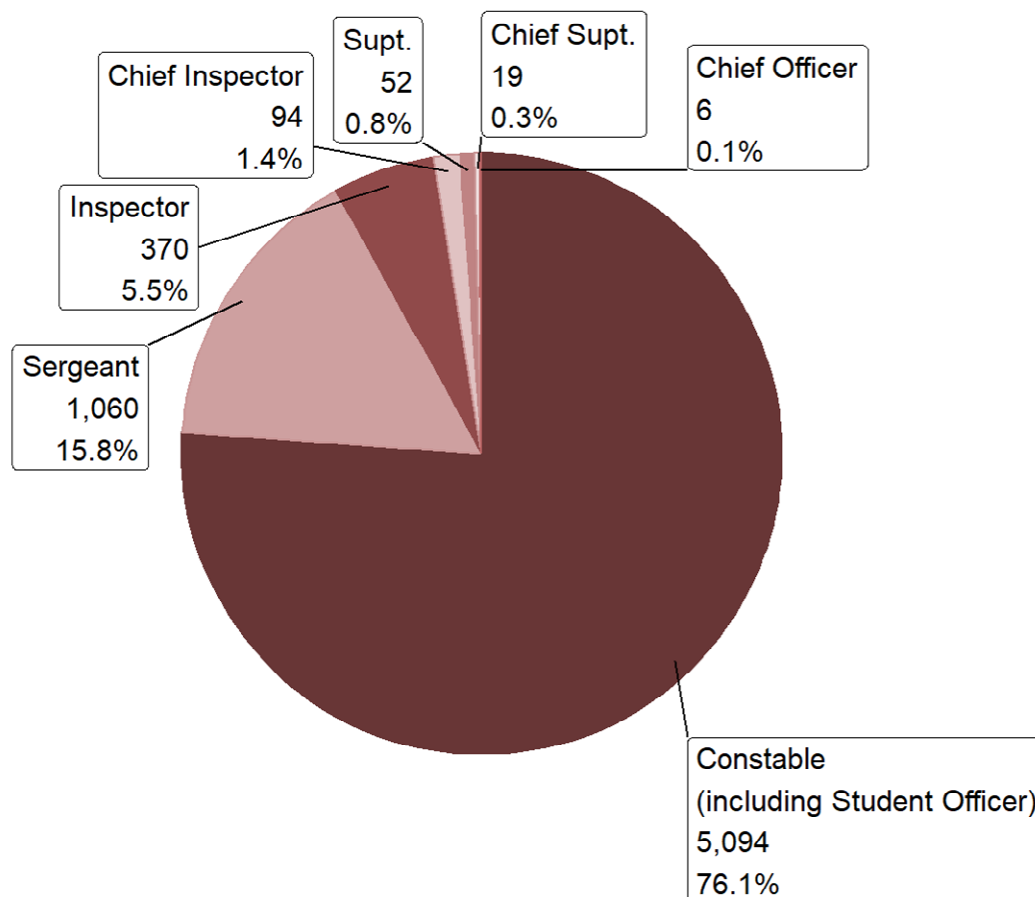
**Chart E.4: Strength of police workforce and police officers (FTE), Northern Ireland, March 2004 – March 2023**



Source: PSNI data.

E.11 Just over three-quarters (76%) of police officers were constables in March 2023 (Chart E.5), and just 8% of officers were in the ranks above sergeant.

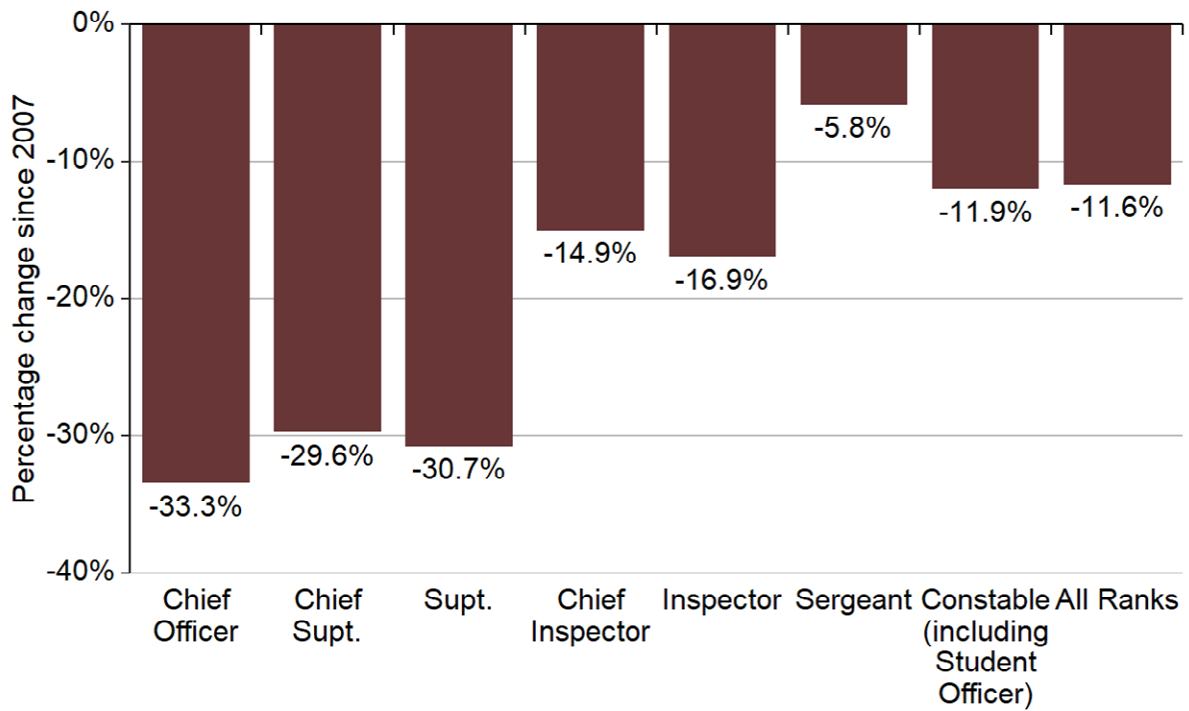
**Chart E.5: Breakdown of full-time equivalent police officers by rank, Northern Ireland, March 2023**



Source: OME analysis of PSNI data.

E.12 Between March 2022 and March 2023 the number of officers decreased for all ranks apart from chief superintendent (up 2 FTE). The largest absolute decrease was in the number of constables (down 285 FTE or 5%). Since 2007 the largest proportional decreases in police officers (Chart E.6) have been for chief officers (down 33%). However, the greatest decrease in absolute terms has been for constables (around 680 FTE officers, 12%).

**Chart E.6: Percentage change in police officer numbers (FTE) between March 2007 and March 2023, by rank, Northern Ireland**



Source: OME analysis of PSNI data.



## Appendix F – Recommended Changes to PSNI Federated and Superintending Ranks’ Pay Scales and Allowances from September 2023

### Salary scales

The salary scales in effect from 1 September 2022 are set out below along with our recommendations for effect from 1 September 2023.

Rank	Pay point	With effect from 1 September 2022	Recommended for effect from 1 September 2023	Notes
<b>Constable (appointed on or after 1 September 2014)</b>	0	£23,343	removed	a
	1	£26,682	£28,551	b
	2	£27,804	£29,751	
	3	£28,932	£30,957	
	4	£30,060	£32,163	
	5	£32,313	£34,575	
	6	£36,852	£39,432	
	7	£43,032	£46,044	
<b>Constable (appointed before 1 September 2014)</b>	0	£28,101	£30,069	
	1	£31,143	£33,324	
	2	£32,835	£35,133	c
	3	£34,728	£37,158	
	4	£35,763	£38,265	
	5	£36,852	£39,432	
	6	£39,924	£42,720	
	7	£43,032	£46,044	d
<b>Sergeant</b>	2	£45,867	£49,077	
	3	£46,803	£50,079	
	4	£48,129	£51,498	d
<b>Inspector</b>	0	£54,600	£58,422	
	1	£56,088	£60,015	
	2	£57,573	£61,602	
	3	£59,064	£63,198	d

Rank	Pay point	With effect from 1 September 2022	Recommended for effect from 1 September 2023	Notes
<b>Chief Inspector</b>	1	£60,234	£64,449	e
	2	£61,404	£65,703	
	3	£62,634	£67,017	d
<b>Superintendent</b>	1	£72,075	£77,121	
	2	£75,735	£81,036	
	3	£79,593	£85,164	
	4	£84,783	£90,717	
<b>Chief Superintendent</b>	1	£88,872	£95,094	
	2	£91,812	£98,238	
	3	£93,651	£103,242	

Notes:

- Pay point 0 not applicable in the PSNI following the exercise of discretion by the Chief Constable of Northern Ireland to set the pay of new entrants at pay point 1 from 1 April 2023.
- Pay point 1 currently applies to new entrants to the PSNI from the start of the Student Officer Development Programme until completion of the subsequent two-year probationary period as a constable (so for 2 years and 21 weeks in total).
- All officers move to this salary point on completion of the Student Officer Development Programme and the subsequent two years of service as a constable.
- Officers in the PSNI who have been on this point for a year will have access to the competence related threshold payment.
- Entry point for an officer appointed to the rank, unless the chief officer of police assigns the officer to a higher point.

## Allowances

The recommended values of allowances from September 2023 are set out below.

<b>Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance</b>	£3,924	per annum
<b>Dog Handlers' Allowance</b>	£2,697	per annum

The values of all other allowances and payments, including Competence Related Threshold Payments, remain unchanged.

## Appendix G – Chief Police Officer Pay

The salaries for chief police officers with effect from 1 September 2022 are set out below along with our recommendations for effect from 1 September 2023.

### Chief and Deputy Chief Constable Salaries

	<b>With effect from 1 September 2022</b>	<b>Recommended for effect from 1 September 2023</b>
Chief Constable	£219,894	£230,889
Deputy Chief Constable	£179,019	£190,482

### Assistant Chief Constables' Pay Scale

<b>Pay point</b>	<b>With effect from 1 September 2022</b>	<b>Recommended for effect from 1 September 2023</b>
1	£107,502	£115,026
2	£114,306	£122,307
3	£121,122	£129,600

Incremental progression will follow upon twelve months' reckonable service on each pay point, on the basis of satisfactory performance.



## Appendix H – Pay changes arising from the Winsor Review in England and Wales and subsequent review in Northern Ireland

	Changes in England and Wales	Changes in Northern Ireland
Shortened 7-point constable scale for existing constables and new scale for new starters	Pay points removed on a phased basis from 2014 to 2016 for existing officers and a new scale introduced for new joiners in 2013.	Introduced in 2014 for existing officers and a new scale with lower starting salary introduced for new joiners in 2014.
Abolition of pay points on sergeants' pay scale	Pay point 0 removed in 2014 Pay point 1 removed in 2020	Pay point 0 removed in 2015 PRRB recommendation to remove pay point 1 implemented in 2021
Shortened 4-point superintendents' pay scale	Applied from 2014	Applied from 2014
Shortened 3-point assistant chief constable pay scale	Applied from 2014 to 2016	Applied from 2014 to 2016
Chief constable discretion on starting pay (between pay points 0 and 1)	Applied from 2013	Applied from April 2023
Competence Related Threshold Payment	Phased abolition by April 2016	Abolition awaited, as a result of a PRRB recommendation that a review of allowances be carried out. The outcome of the review is under consideration.
Special Priority Payments (£500 – £3,000 or exceptionally amounts up to £5,000)	Abolished in 2012	Abolished in 2014
On-call Allowance	£15 rate introduced in 2013 and increased to £20 in 2019. Extended to the superintending ranks in 2019.	£20 rate for the federated ranks on weekdays and weekends and £30 on public holidays from each 24-hour period <sup>25</sup> . Extended to the superintending ranks

<sup>25</sup> Following the 2022 review of allowances, the DOJ has proposed reducing the On-call Allowance to £20 on six of the eight public holidays (while two of them, 17 March (St Patrick's Day) and 12 July, would retain the £30 rate). The outcome is awaited.

		in 2020 at a flat rate of £20.
Abolition of bonus schemes and post-related allowances	Suspended from 2012 and abolished in 2014	Abolished from 2014
Overtime rates	<p>Rate of time and one third for 'casual overtime' retained, with payment of travelling time for recalls between tours of duty.</p> <p>4-hour minimum payment when recalled to duty – abolished.</p> <p>Cancellation of rest day with fewer than 5 days' notice – rate changed to time and a half from double time.</p> <p>Pay at time and a half for working on a rostered rest day with fewer than 15 days' notice.</p>	<p>Casual overtime rate unchanged.</p> <p>On each of the first 4 occasions on which casual retention overtime is worked within a seven-day period the first 30 minutes of overtime will be discounted from the total overtime payment that arises.</p> <p>4-hour minimum payment when recalled to duty – retained.</p> <p>Payment of double time for cancellation of rest day changed from 5 days' notice to 3 days' notice.</p>
Away from home allowance and unsocial hours allowance	Introduced from 2012.	<p>Away from home allowance introduced in May 2023 specifically for mutual aid deployments only.</p> <p>Unsocial hours allowance not linked to mutual aid and not available to PSNI officers.</p>
Motor vehicle rates	Linked to Local Government rates from 2012. Then from September 2016, following PRRB recommendations, the rates payable for mileage expenses to both essential and casual users were aligned to the prevailing HMRC rates.	Aligned with Northern Ireland Civil Service rates in 2014.
Occupational maternity and adoption pay	26 weeks' fully paid leave from January 2021.	18 weeks' fully paid leave from March 2017.

Voluntary exit scheme and compulsory severance scheme	Voluntary exit provisions introduced in 2013.	Not introduced.
Replacement allowance	Retained, but abolish increases for change in personal circumstances from 2011.	Not changed.
Individual recognition awards	A chief officer can award a discretionary payment of between £50 and £2,000 where satisfied that an officer has performed work of an outstandingly demanding, unpleasant or important nature.	The Chief Constable may award a payment of between £50 and £500 to an officer of outstandingly demanding or unpleasant work or work of an important nature.
Team recognition awards	Discretion to make bonus payments of £50-100 for unpleasant or demanding tasks extended to whole teams from 2012	Not introduced.
Regional allowances	Chief Constable discretion to vary levels of regional allowance payment up to the maximum based on local retention needs (not performance) from 2013	Not applicable.

