



Metropolitan Police Authority

Human Resources Committee – 6 November 2003

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Report by the Commissioner

Summary

This is the regular report to inform the HR Committee of progress, and related issues, of police and police staff recruitment and retention against budgeted workforce targets for the financial year 2003/2004.

A. RECOMMENDATION – That

members note this report.

B. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. The police workforce strength continues to grow in line with projections and is anticipated to achieve the budgeted workforce target (BWT) of 29,856 in March 2004. **At the end of September 2003, the overall police strength had reached 29,493 against the target recruiting profile of 29,188.**
2. **The respective strengths for both visible ethnic minority (VEM) and women officers are also increasing in line with projections.** At the end September 2003, VEM officer strength had increased to 1,730 officers or 5.9% of overall police strength. During the same period of time, the strength of women officer strength increased to 5,095 officers or 17.3% of overall strength.
3. **The level of police wastage is showing signs of improvement and provides evidence of the impact of retention measures recently introduced.** Between April and September 2003, a total of 829 officers have left the MPS compared with 912 leavers in the same period last year. This is particularly encouraging since the current police workforce strength is 2,099 officers greater than at the end of September 2002. Police and police staff wastage appears to be relatively constant, with only minor seasonal variation.
4. **Since April 2003, a total of 1,859 police officers have been recruited,** of which there were 217 (11.7%) VEM and 462 (24.9%) women officers. Of those who joined, 1,611 recruits have been required to undertake the full training course, and 248 officers have been deployed directly on borough or OCU. The future intakes are

being filled in line with recruiting requirements. Equivalent data for PCSOs, sourced from PCSO project offices, Communications Officers, sourced directly from C3i and Police Staff, sourced from workforce data, is included below. Overall police staff strength as at the end of September 2003 was 11486 with 2233 (19.4%) VEM and 6788 (59.1%) women. PCSO strength was 967 with 337 (34.8%) VEM and 278 (28.8%) women.

Joiners April - September 2003			
Role	Total	VEM	Women
Police Officers	1,859	217	462
Total	100%	11.7%	24.9%

Transport PCSO	195	92	47
Community/Security PCSO	257	97	90
Total	452 (100%)	189 (41.8%)	137 (30.3%)

Police Staff	664	151	378
Total	100%	22.7%	56.9%

Communication Officers	250	47	151
Total	100%	18.8%	60.4%

5. **The 'Taskforce Batch Process' has completed within the original time-scales. The initial results show that all the applications received before 1 July 2003, have completed the recruitment selection process. An end-process report can be found at Appendix 1. Due to the number of successful applications resulting from the taskforce process, the recruitment pause on sending out application packs to new applicants has been continued. Discussions are also taking place on the impact of these successful applicants on next year's budget and targets.**
6. The first 'live' National Recruitment Standards assessment centre within the MPS took place on 30 September 2003. Each participant undertook a written test, verbal and numerical logical reasoning tests, 4 interactive exercises and a competency-based interview.
7. A Career Management and Retention Unit (CMRU) was recently set-up to provide coordination and focus in the development of retention and career progression products and services. Despite the Unit's infancy, the Property Zone – a multi-agency initiative to provide staff with advice and guidance relating to property/housing issues – will be available to new recruits during October 2003, and more widely available from January 2004. Additionally, options are being explored for the procurement of a multi-media induction programme for new members of staff. Procurement options have also been evaluated in connection with the outsourcing of exit-surveys.

8. The new PACT focus programme that provides individual support, arranged by Tower Hamlets College, started in July and initial results are very encouraging with an overall selection centre pass rate of 82%. An informal process is used by the Positive Action Central Team (PACT) to disseminate best practice amongst Network volunteers across Boroughs and OCU. This is particularly useful in connection with local Borough recruitment activities and events.
9. Since April 2003, approximately 6 Traffic Wardens (5 white and 1 VEM) have become PCSOs, 14 PCSOs (12 white and 2 VEM) have become police officers and 2 Specials (2 women) have become police officers. The Home Office has planned a Specials' campaign in February 2004.

C. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

Equality and diversity implications arising from this report are covered within the body of this report.

D. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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Background Papers: None

This appendix is an evaluation by Neil Bayne, Director HR Recruitment, of the recent activities undertaken by the Taskforce to clear all the applications that were received before 1 July 2003, in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the police selection process.

HIGH LEVEL EVALUATION OF TASKFORCE PROCESS

1. For some while now recruitment into the MPS has been in a healthy position. The success at attracting large numbers of applicants had meant that processing times had increased to an average of 44 weeks (from time of receipt of application until offer is made). Further, with new applications numbering around 200 per week continuously, it was proving almost impossible to break the cycle and make improvements. In June this year, recruitment officers were faced with individual caseloads of 600 applicants each meaning not only ever-increasing hold ups but also a service to candidates that was not as high as we would like.
2. At the beginning of June, over 6,000 applicants were in the recruitment system at some point (excluding offers made) and of these, over 4,000 were at the beginning of the process. It was therefore decided to try something radically different to break the cycle, deal with all the applications and improve the situation. The situation was also necessary as the MPS were committed to introducing the National Recruitment Standards on 30 September 2003; all outstanding applicants after this date were expected to be dealt with under this new system of assessment. There was a need for more than one reason to clear the backlog once and for all!
3. To achieve this, a two-pronged strategy was adopted:
 - A task force approach to deal with all outstanding applicants so as to end the excessive processing times encountered by applicants.
 - A pause in the sending out of new applications beginning Monday 23 June to enable the backlog of applications to be successfully dealt with.
4. To achieve our aims, there needed to be some process improvements within the recruitment activity that enabled us to deal with applicants in large numbers. By making Day 1 the PIRT and written tests only, we increased throughput for Day 1s from 40 a day to 200. Interviews were moved to Day 2 and were combined with the existing elements of the Day 2 process (Physical Fitness Test and Medical). By dealing with Day 2 applicants in three groups and extending the operations at Hendon to a 12 hours day minimum for the 3 months June-August, we managed to succeed in our aims.
5. The statistics make some reading:
 - 6,446 outstanding applicants as at 1 June 2003 dealt with by the Recruitment Directorate.
 - 3,666 successful applicants after Day 1 (PIRT testing).

- Over 3,000 applicants dealt with on a Day 2 over an 8 weeks period (with some days up to 120 applicants being seen!)
 - 1,752 successful passes after Day 2 (just over 1/4 success rate from original numbers applying). At the same time, our assessment criteria were improved to take into account the large numbers meaning an extremely high quality of applicant will join Hendon!
6. None of this would have been possible without the sterling work of the members of the Recruitment Directorate, PFT and PSG, many of whom worked long hours. These were supported by additional police officers and police staff trained in interviewing who volunteered to help out. Others in Recruitment covered for staff working on the task force or worked at weekends to ensure we kept up with all the rest of our recruitment needs: communications officers and PCSOs in particular. Thank you to all of you who were involved.
 7. These efforts have enabled us to fully clear the backlog of applications moving into NRS and to set ourselves a timescale of 16 weeks going forward from application arrival to offer. A vast improvement on the 44 weeks previously expected!
 8. The high number of offers made also leaves us in an extremely healthy situation with regard to meeting our recruitment targets and we are confident of meeting our VEM, female and overall recruit targets as a result for this year. We will also begin next year with a positive recruitment situation that will need to be fully evaluated once the budget for next year has been finalised. Consequently, the recruitment pause on the sending out of new applications remains in force for the time being.