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LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

Audrey Nicoll MSP
Convener, Criminal Justice Committee
Room T2:60
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

JusticeCommittee@parliament.scot

5 August 2022

CO/074/2022

Dear Ms Nicoll

POLICE PENSION CHANGES AND THE IMPACT ON OFFICER NUMBERS

I write in response to your correspondence of 28 June 2022 regarding the changes to police pension arrangements and the impact of officer retirements.

You ask for information on anything the Authority is doing to plan for the loss of experienced and skilled officers, and detail of the Authority's oversight and scrutiny of the impact of this. The Authority expects Police Scotland in the first instance, to highlight, analyse and set out how it proposes to address the impact of high numbers of skilled officers leaving the service. It is the Authority's role to provide oversight of this work and test it with a view to providing assurance on appropriateness, relevance and potential impact.

The Authority's People Committee is leading our oversight of this particular issue. A detailed report was presented by Police Scotland to the [Committee on 1 June 2022](#). Members discussed the challenges, forecast retirements and Police Scotland's actions to manage recruitment and mitigate any resulting impact. Committee members were satisfied that Police Scotland has sought to understand the issue and is actively working to address it. In addition, the committee has requested further analysis of data and trends from Exit Interviews to give members a deeper understanding of the reasons being recorded for why officers and staff are leaving the services. This information will be presented to a future meeting of the committee.

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Police Scotland will continue to report quarterly updates to the committee and members will keep the issue, impact and progress under close scrutiny. Linked to this, the People Committee receives succession planning updates which highlight any emerging gaps or risks across the workforce.

With regards to the impact of retirements on service delivery, we note DCO Page's comments to the Criminal Justice Committee. These comments are consistent with those reported to the Authority to date - that the efforts and mitigations are ensuring that the public continue to receive a responsive police service. Our People Committee is monitoring this issue, while the Authority's Policing Performance Committee leads our oversight and scrutiny of service delivery, tracking Police Scotland's performance against the agreed framework. The Authority would expect any adverse impact on the service delivered to the public to be highlighted and reported through the performance reporting framework. There were no issues reported to the Policing Performance Committee at the end of quarter 1 relating to the impact of service delivery due to officer retirements. We will continue to closely monitor that picture.

You also ask whether the Authority is undertaking work to assess whether stress or other psychological illnesses are contributing to officers opting to leave the service. The People Committee considers workforce data on a quarterly basis which includes reporting on absences related to psychological disorders. The committee has a strong focus on seeking the evidence to assure ourselves that Police Scotland demonstrate how it is using data to inform and prioritise action. At the June meeting, Police Scotland confirmed it is carrying out detailed analysis on stress and psychological illness within the workforce. Members welcomed this activity and will consider the findings at a future People Committee, alongside information on what support (both proactive and reactive) is provided by Police Scotland to support resilience and psychological wellbeing of staff. This information, coupled with the additional analysis requested by the committee of data and trends from Exit Interviews will provide a fuller picture of the impact of stress and other psychological illnesses on or workforce.

Another area of the committee's interest in relation to wellbeing has been [Police Scotland's Organisational Implementation Plan](#). The implementation plan seeks to address the range of issues identified through our 2021 workforce survey and improve the wellbeing of the policing workforce as outlined in the report. The Authority is supportive of these efforts and activities in response to the survey findings. We will continue to closely monitor their progress and impact.

Finally, the voice and opinions of our workforce representatives are valued and heard. I have personally committed to meeting staff associations and trade union representatives regularly throughout the year. In addition representatives are invited to attend and make contributions at our People Committee meetings. Representatives also attend a group established by Police Scotland to consider and respond to risks arising from changes to police pension arrangements. This means they have been involved in discussions about all these issues to date and will continue to be.

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I trust this information is helpful. I have asked the Authority's Chief Executive to ensure the committee is aware of any further updates or considerations by the Authority on these matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martyn Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

MARTYN EVANS
Chair

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