

Meeting	SPA People Committee
Date	29 May 2025
Location	Webex
Title of Paper	Ill Health Retiral and Injury on Duty
Presented By	Nicky Page, Chief Officer Human Resources / Jackie Kydd – SPA Workforce Governance Lead
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with an update on ill health retirement and injury on duty approvals made by the Authority under the delegated approval to the Chief Executive.

This paper will also outline findings of the analysis of causal factors behind Police Officer Injury on Duty awards in response to action PC – 20240530-001.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report outlines the decisions taken in ill health retiral and injury on duty cases in the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 1.2 Additionally, this report provides a granular outline of the causal factors linked to injury on duty awards in response to action PC – 20240530- 001.

2. ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT / REDEPLOYMENT

- 2.1 Applications for retirement on the grounds of ill health (IHR) are determined under the Police Pensions (Scotland) Regulations 2015. This allows the Authority to determine if an officer ought to retire on the grounds that they are permanently disabled for the performance of their duties as a police officer. In considering whether a person is permanently disabled, the regulations provide that the Police Authority shall refer certain questions to the Authority's Selected Medical Practitioner (SMP) who shall provide a report with their determination.
- 2.2 Before receiving the documentation from the SMP a robust process is undertaken within Police Scotland to consider the capabilities that have been determined by the SMP as permanently disabled and if any redeployment opportunities exist. Whether any opportunities for redeployment have been identified is contained within the report that is submitted to the Authority with comments and a recommendation provided by the Director of People and Development (on behalf of the Chief Constable as permitted by the regulations).
- 2.3 The table below presents information on the number of cases presented by Police Scotland, which have been considered by the Authority in the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

	No of IHR Submitted to SPA	Recommended by Police Scotland		Decision by SPA	
		IHR	Redeployment	IHR	Redeployment
October	0	0	0	0	0
November	9	7	2	7	2
December	5	5	0	5	0
January	3	2	1	2	1
February	8	8	0	8	0
March	4	4	0	4	0
TOTAL	29	26	3	26	3

- 2.4 The Authority has approved 26 officers for ill health retiral in the last 6 months of 2024-2025, with 3 officers being redeployed to suitable roles in Police Scotland.
- 2.5 In total, the Authority approved 49 officers for ill health retiral and 6 officers for redeployment in 2024-2025. Future reporting will look to provide further trend and profile analysis.

2. INJURY ON DUTY

- 2.1 Applications for Injury on Duty (IOD) awards are considered in terms of the Police (Injury Benefit) (Scotland) Regulations 2007. Regulation 30 of the 2007 Regulations provides that, where a police authority is considering whether to grant an IOD award to an individual, it should refer questions to the SMP.
- 2.2 Subsequent to the receipt of the documentation from the SMP, Police Scotland complete their administration process which includes requesting comments from the ex-officer and completing the 'Police Authority Report – Injury on Duty Award' form. Once complete this form is sent to the Director of People and Development for comment prior to its onward submission to SPA.
- 2.3 The table below presents the information on the number of cases presented by Police Scotland, which have been considered by the Authority in the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

	No of IOD Submitted to SPA	Recommended by Police Scotland		Decision by SPA	
		Approved	Not Approved	Approved	Not Approved
October	9	9	0	9	0
November	3	3	0	3	0
December	1	1	0	1	0
January	4	4	0	4	0
February	3	3	0	3	0
March	2	2	0	2	0
TOTAL	22	22	0	22	0

- 2.4 The Authority has approved 22 applications for injury on duty in the last 6 months of 2024-2025.
- 2.5 In total, the Authority has approved 36 applications for injury on duty in 2024-2025. Future reporting will look to provide further trend and profile analysis.

3. INJURY ON DUTY CAUSAL ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The police injury pension can be seen as a compensation system for police officers who are exposed to risks on behalf of the rest of society and where those risks materialise, injury pensions are part of the overall remuneration package offered to officers. They are lifelong payments to reflect the fact that a former police officer has suffered duty injuries which have led to the officer losing their position and salary.
- 3.2 The purpose of a police injury (benefit) pension scheme was explained by the Minister, Mr Tony McNulty, in a 2008 Consultation on the Police Injury Benefit Regulations which said "Police injury benefits are an integral part of the overall financial package for police officers, and provide valuable reassurance for officers who have to face dangerous situations"
- 3.3 Injury on duty awards approved by the Authority for the financial years 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 were analysed. Each award has been examined and categorised under several headings known to be inherent, have a potential risk or danger associated with policing and that may be the cause of long-term ill health.
- 3.4 The categories considered are:
- exposure to loss of life. This encompasses attendance at road traffic fatalities, suicides, murder etc
 - accident not involving another person
 - assault/injury by suspect/member of the public
 - unwanted/unfavourable treatment
 - subject of investigation
 - vehicle accident on duty
 - grievance
 - whistleblowing
 - injury while undertaking training
 - body armour
 - viewing of images
 - Organised Crime Group (OCG) threat
 - workload
 - Covid-19

The following table shows a comparison for the 3-year period 2022-2025. **It is prudent to note that more than one category can be attributed to a single IoD award.**

Year	Number of officers approved for IoD award	Exposure to loss of life	Assault /injury by suspect /public	Viewing of images	Body Armour	Vehicle accident on duty	undertaking training	OCG threat	Subject of misconduct /criminal investigation	Accident on duty not involving other person	unwanted /unfavourable treatment	Grievance	Whistleblower	Work load	Covid
2022-2023	18	3	7	1	0	5	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	0	0
2023-2024	59	12	19	1	0	7	3	0	4	4	14	4	0	1	1
2024-2025	36	9	13	2	1	6	5	1	2	3	5	2	1	1	2
TOTAL 22-25	113	24	39	4	1	18	8	1	7	10	21	6	1	2	3
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL		21.2%	34.5%	3.5%	0.9%	15.9%	7.1%	0.9%	6.2%	8.8%	18.6%	5.3%	0.9%	1.8%	2.7%

Table 1

- 3.5 Table 1 shows that IoD awards more than tripled from 2022-2023 to 2023-2024 however, the large number of IoD awards approved in 2023-2024 were as a result of the backlog from Covid-19. In 2024-2025 the numbers approved for an IoD award significantly reduced, however were still double the number approved in 2022-2023.
- 3.6 Across all years 2022-2025, assault/injury by a suspect/member of the public was the most prominent reason listed in IoD awards for each year, with this being included in 39 out of the total of 113 cases. Exposure to loss of life is the second highest overall factor, being cited as a reason for 24 of IoD awards in total over the 3 years analysed. The third highest overall factor is unwanted/unfavourable treatment, being listed in 21 out of the 3-year total of 113 cases. Vehicle accidents on duty are listed as a reason in 18 awards over 2022-2025 making this the fourth highest causal factor overall and has remained relatively consistent in the reported numbers.
- 3.7 There is a definitive distinction in the causal factors between those linked to the occupation of police officer and those that are organisational factors and could occur in any workforce. As outlined in Thrivewise's Independent Review of Police Scotland's Health and Wellbeing Framework "Operational stressors are those directly related to the nature of policing work. Whilst these can present considerable challenges to officers' physical and mental health, research consistently finds that it is organisational stressors that pose the most significant risk to psychological wellbeing." Recommendations from this review and HMICS Frontline Focus - Wellbeing Inspection have informed Police Scotland's wellbeing action plan.

4. INTERVENTIONS

- 4.1 Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority offer several interventions to support those who have experienced potentially traumatic incidents or who are experiencing post-traumatic stress symptoms, most notably the Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) programme and the Employee Assistance programme (EAP).
- 4.2 During 2023, a new Occupational Health (OH) and Employee Assistance Programme provision was procured, adding additional services and interventions aimed at support for psychological conditions with a focus on specific interventions for trauma-related conditions.
- 4.3 The revision of the EAP contract aims to ensure a person-centred, preventative service, which proactively engages with our people. The programme of support is shaped by individual's needs, supporting both work-related and personal needs, and providing the most appropriate therapeutic interventions. The type and duration of support is driven by need.
- 4.4 Encouragingly, between April and September 2024, there was an increased uptake in a variety of newly available types of support including pure cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR). Early data is showing uptake levels increasing month-on-month. Most significantly, of those participating in these treatments, 92.31% are recording improved trauma scores.
- 4.5 As well as supporting those in need following incidents, prevention now features heavily in the Health and Wellbeing action plan and its approach. Details of this can be found in the [August 2024 People Committee paper](#). The action plan was developed considering recommendations from both a commissioned independent assessment (Thrivewise), and recommendations provided from HMICS Frontline Focus – Wellbeing inspection.
- 4.6 A communication plan to promote the new OH and EAP contracts, and these enhancements also feature in the People Manager Development Programme (PMDP) to ensure line managers are aware of and engage support available for their people when needed. This programme also contains modules on the effective handling and early resolution of complaints and grievances which is pivotal to minimise escalation and impacts of work-related issues,

and to promote reduction and recovery from ill-health caused, contributed, or exacerbated by these.

- 4.7 Over the past two-years, there have been significant developments in the management of complaints and grievances. In 2023 the Creating a Positive Workplace initiative had a focus on resolving workplaces issues and early interventions. A new grievance process was implemented along with the promotion of a mediation service, aimed at early resolution of workplace disputes.
- 4.8 The analysis of causal factors has been shared with the Health and Wellbeing team to allow, where possible, further targeted proactive interventions.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are personnel implications associated with this paper. A robust proactive and reactive wellbeing provision with clear, supportive mechanisms to manage those who are unwell, or injured will ensure the health of officers and staff remains a strategic focus.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are legal implications associated with this report. Ensuring we have reasonable, practical arrangements to prevent ill-health or injury, may prevent an increase in employee relations issues and potential legal cases as well as support the strategic aim to improve staff and officer safety and wellbeing.

8. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper.

Police Scotland relies on the trust of the people we serve, and our reputation will impact of the numbers of people who see us as a good employer they want to work with. Being seen as a supportive employer who has strong and robust employee wellbeing and support mechanisms in place is likely to impact our reputation as a potential employer.

9. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no social implications associated with this paper.

10. COMMUNITY IMPACT

10.1 There are no community implications associated with this paper.

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are equality implications associated with this paper.

SPA and Police Scotland ensures all processes related to the management of ill health and any early retirement from employment or role is conducted in accordance with our responsibilities and obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

12. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.