

SURREY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

18 April 2023

Surrey Police Uplift & Workforce Planning

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Surrey Police's delivery of the Government Police Officer uplift programme and wider commentary on key workforce planning issues.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Government's Police Officer uplift programme, whilst greatly welcome, has been a significant challenge for Surrey Police. Whilst all forces have had to contend with a buoyant jobs market and rising salary expectations, the recruitment challenge has been compounded in Surrey due to both the high cost of living and our proximity to London - which places us in direct competition with the Metropolitan Police for suitable recruits.
- 2.2 Although Surrey remains on target to meet officer uplift targets, the ongoing recruitment and retention challenge for both officers and staff remains a key challenge for the year ahead.
- 2.3 This report explores both these issues and work being undertaken by Surrey Police to mitigate.

3 OFFICER UPLIFT

3.1 Progress:

- 3.2 The latest report from the Government's National Uplift Team has confirmed the Commissioner's view that we are on-track to hit our local headcount target by 31 March 2023.
- 3.3 Surrey's uplift performance was considered against a headcount baseline of 1,994. The term 'baseline' refers to the starting figure against which uplift is determined. The baseline accounts for people in post at the start of the recruitment drive, and also accounts for any recruitment planned prior to the uplift announcement.

3.4 Under the National Uplift programme, Surrey was required to meet a total headcount increase of 259 by 31 March 2023. As of 28 February 2023, Surrey's headcount uplift stood at 252, 97.3% of the target. With a final intake underway, we are confident that we will exceed the required target by a comfortable margin.

3.5 Whilst delivery has been a challenge, the force has put substantial effort into reducing attrition, and this has helped put us on course to meet the required target. However, the attrition challenge remains considerable, and it's important to note that the Government's uplift programme only counts candidates who are joining the Police Service for the first time. This does not include those returning after a period of absence, nor does it include transfers or those re-joining.

3.6 **Chart 1: Monthly recruitment numbers by year***



* A small number of officers were recruited during the government uplift programme using local funding and these are not included in the above data.

3.7 **Demographics:**

3.8 Female representation amongst new joiners compares well to other forces, projected to stand at 40.2% by 31 March. The number of officers identifying as Black, Asian, Mixed or Other stands at 6.5% of the total uplift cohort.

3.9 The Commissioner's Data Hub allows residents to view the latest publicly available uplift data for Surrey, including demographics: <https://data.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/uplift.php?nav=policelift&data=policelift>

3.10 The Home Office also publishes quarterly national data showing overall uplift performance for all forces. This data and additional information concerning the programme can be found online here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-officer-uplift-statistics>

3.11 2023/24

3.12 It is vital that the significant investment in police officer numbers is not undermined by high levels of attrition amongst new or existing recruits. The Home Office will continue to monitor officer numbers during 2023/24, and there are financial penalties in place for forces that fall below their baseline post-uplift total. Penalties for minor slippage in numbers broadly reflect the gross cost of employing said number of officers, but the penalty increases dramatically once a certain threshold is reached.

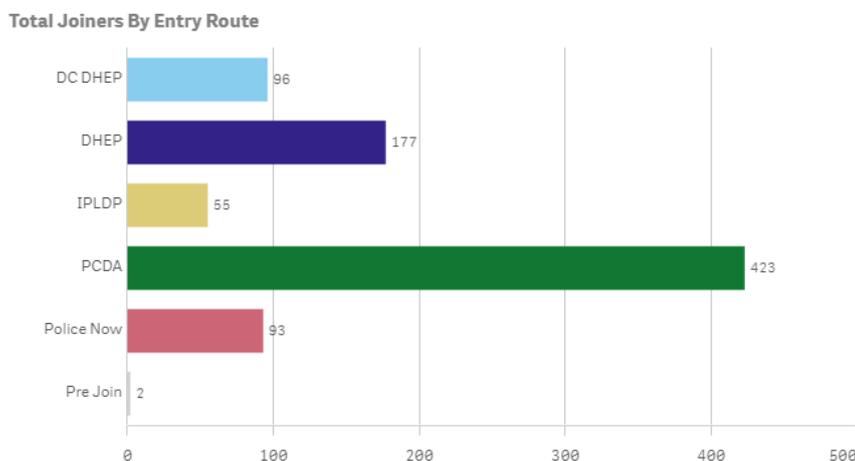
3.13 For reference, the table below shows force-wide officer attrition rates for April 2022 to February 2023, broken down by exit type. This demonstrates the strong headwinds which any recruitment process has to overcome in order to provide a net uplift in total numbers.

3.14 **Chart 2:** Attrition by type for April 2022 to February 2023

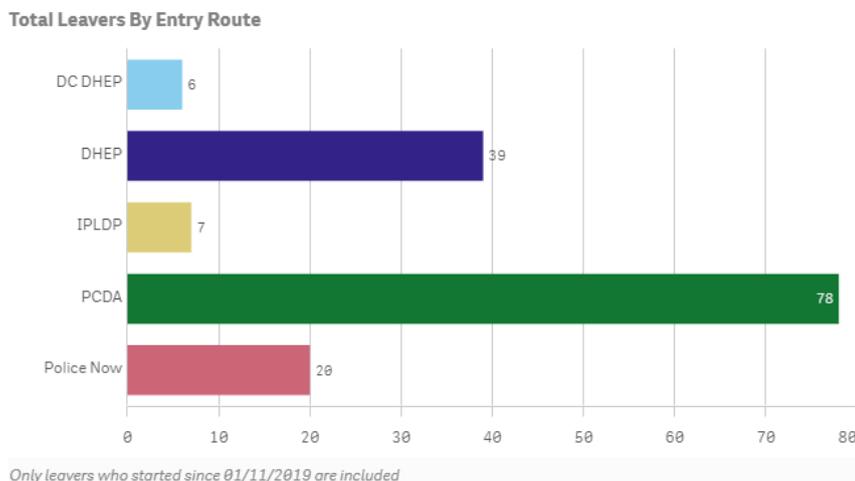
	Headcount	%
Student Officer Leaver	80	34.8%
Transfer to Another Force	50	21.7%
Resigned	46	20.0%
Retirement	44	19.1%
Early Retirement/III Health Retirement	8	3.5%
Other	1	0.4%
Death in Service	1	0.4%
Total	230	

3.15 The Force are also actively monitoring attrition specifically for the uplift cohort, broken down by route of entry.

3.16 **Chart 3:** Total joiners by Entry Route



3.17 **Chart 4: Attrition by type**



Key	
DC DHEP	Detective Constable Degree Holder Entry Programme
DHEP	Degree Holder Entry Programme
IPLDP	Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (Traditional Entry)
PCDA	Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship

- 3.18 Recognising recent national developments, one of the greatest challenges facing Surrey in 2023/24 will be retaining officers whilst ensuring that our vetting and PSD functions can effectively root out those that do not uphold the high standards we expect.
- 3.19 In recognition of this, the Commissioner’s office has significantly increased oversight of the force’s Professional Standards function, allowing us greater access to key data to support detailed scrutiny and discussions with the Chief Constable.
- 3.20 Regular meetings with the Head of Professional Standards Department and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) allow the Commissioner and her team to effectively monitor and scrutinise complaint and misconduct data. Furthermore, direct access to complaint management databases allows the OPCC to further enhance this scrutiny by allowing the dedicated Complaints Lead to dip check and review cases. New tracking systems also allow the OPCC to effectively monitor recommendations made following statutory review requests, and a new process has been set up to dip check vetting decisions rejected by the force will allow greater understanding of disproportionality.

4 STAFFING

- 4.1 Although Surrey remains on target to meet officer uplift targets, the ongoing recruitment and retention challenge has seen the average vacancy rate for police staff rise to 12%, against a target of 8%. For some teams this is a lot higher and some a lot lower.

- 4.2 However, this capacity gap often impacts most notably on some of our most critical teams such as the Contact Centre and IT, with many in the latter drawn to the more competitive salaries on offer in the private sector. Whilst Surrey Police is acutely aware of these issues and has worked hard during 2022/23 to retain good staff, its options are limited in the face of national wage inflation.
- 4.3 The stringent vetting requirements for staff often results in a lengthy wait for new staff, as various background checks are conducted. This can lead to attrition during the recruitment process itself, with individuals finding alternative employment and withdrawing from the process. The force do carefully monitor vetting backlogs and are acutely aware of the impact this has on the recruitment process, but equally recognise that the public expect and deserve all staff and officers to be appropriately vetted.
- 4.4 Staffing levels in the Contact Centre and Force Control Room (FCR) are currently a key area of focus for both Surrey Police and the PCC. The Commissioner is committed to full transparency around this vital function and both panel members and residents can track 101 and 999 call answering performance, as a well as Grade 1 response time compliance, via the PCC's Data Hub: https://data.surrey-pcc.gov.uk/priority_four.php?nav=plan&data=pcc&plan=4&sub=1
- 4.5 The OPCC has submitted a separate report detailing specific work being undertaken in this area.

5 RETENTION

- 5.1 Force Level attrition is reported and monitored through the Capacity, Capability and Performance Board (CCPB) and reviewed at Strategic resource Management Meeting (SRMM), locally it is monitored through Finance and Human Resource meetings. There is a joint Force retention review meeting held every six months where stakeholders review leaver data and qualitative information from exit surveys and interviews to identify any trends or issues and agree required interventions. Outcomes from this group are reported to CCPB. In addition, officer attrition is monitored through the Force Op Uplift Strategic Delivery Board. We are also part of the South-East Regional Recruitment and Retention Group which looks at issues and trends for the region.
- 5.2 The Force has seen increased officer attrition since the end of 2021. There is an early warning system in place, where potential leavers are identified and there are local interventions to encourage officers to stay on. For student officers a new role of Student Support Officer who engages early intervention when there are any signs that a student officer may be considering leaving, this has already resulted in the retention of student officers. All student officer leaver reasons are recorded by L&PD in addition to the corporate exit surveys.
- 5.3 Police staff attrition remains broadly stable, though as stated there are some pockets of higher attrition in Contact & Control and specialisms where skills are in high demand – such as IT and vehicle maintenance. Specific strands of work are in place to address and mitigate as much as possible.

5.4 Across officer and staff exit data the most common leaver reasons are career development and work life balance. Since 2022 we are increasingly seeing pay being cited as a reason.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Police and Crime Panel is asked to:

- Note the content of the report.

7 CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact: Damian Markland – Head of Performance & Governance

Email: damian.markland@surrey.police.uk