

From: Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Police officer recruitment update
Date: 8 December 2020



Introduction:

1. This report provides an update on the number of officers recruited to date, and also on progress towards the March 2021 uplifted establishment figure.
2. The Commissioner is grateful to Kent Police for its assistance with this paper.

New officers:

3. The Force is currently working towards an uplifted establishment of 3,847.5 FTE by 31 March 2021. This compares with 3,787 officers in March 2010 and 3,181 in 2016 when the PCC came into office.
4. To achieve the uplift and replace those who leave through natural attrition, the Force has the capacity to train a total of 449 new officers in 2020/21. Whilst this exceeds the number required to achieve the establishment uplift, the actual intakes are being adjusted to align to budgetary requirements.
5. Despite Covid-19, the officer recruitment process has continued with applications being shortlisted, eligibility checks completed and briefings all conducted virtually. Senior interviews have also continued to take place virtually and the Force was an early adopter of the College of Policing online assessment centre.
6. The more 'traditional methods of outreach' were quickly adapted to virtual platforms. Activity has included university and school's recruitment days, online, virtual Q&A sessions and work with the armed forces (e.g. career transition partnership events).
7. The Force also continues to capitalise on its ability to attract quality candidates through its workforce. The 'Force recruitment ambassador programme' was launched earlier in the year and has grown considerably with over 100 members of the workforce, trained and equipped with the knowledge and expertise to support recruitment locally, attend events and promote the Force.
8. As at 31 October 2020 the officer strength was 3815.99 FTE (31.51 under establishment); based on current projections the Force is on track to achieve the uplift by 31 March 2021.
9. In the period 1 April to 31 October 2020, a total of 204 officers joined the Force (all entry routes), of which 15 were BAME (7.35%). Below is a breakdown by entry route:
 - New recruits: 154, of which 9 were BAME (5.84%)
 - New recruits (Investigate First scheme): 35, of which 5 were BAME (14.29%)
 - Other entry routes (e.g. transfers in, re-joiners): 15, of which 1 was BAME (6.67%).
10. The most recent intake of 40 joined on the 26 October 2020, of which 5 were BAME (12.50%):
 - New recruits: 20, of which 2 were BAME (10%)
 - New recruits (Investigate First scheme): 20, of which 3 were BAME (15%)
11. All officers who join the Force commence their training with 22 weeks at the Kent Police College, prior to graduating to a Divisional Local Policing Team role where they continue to be tutored for a further 26 weeks. Officers remain deployed within Local Policing roles until completion of their 2-year probation period.
12. Those who join through the Investigate First scheme commence their training as per above, but after a year move into a detective role. Officers who transfer from another force can be posted anywhere within Kent Police depending on their experience / skills and the vacancies available at the time.

13. To maximise opportunities to enhance workforce diversity at senior ranks the Positive Action Team has piloted a new initiative to attract external level transfers seeking promotion opportunities:
- A Positive Action virtual careers event was promoted through diversity networks
 - The hour-long virtual event was opened by the Chief Constable who showcased the Force
 - Attendees were given the opportunity to speak to recent senior transferees
14. The Positive Action Team are developing a similar event that will aim to attract diversity into the PC and Sgt ranks through open transfer opportunities.
15. At recent Superintendent and Chief Inspector promotion boards, the Force has had more qualified candidates than vacancies. Anecdotally, it would seem the Force's reputation is also attracting high calibre candidates from other forces; in the Chief Inspector process for example, 2 BAME officers were appointed who came from Greater Manchester Police and the Metropolitan Police Service.
16. Latest application data shows there has been a significant increase in the proportion of BAME and female applications. The table below shows the latest position for the calendar year to date, last 8 weeks, last 4 weeks and latest week:

Week commencing	Total applications	BAME H/count	BAME %	Female H/count	Female %
06/01/20 to 02/11/20	2534	200	7.89%	824	32.52%
14/09/20 to 02/11/20 (last 8 weeks)	644	58	9.01%	224	34.78%
12/10/20 to 02/11/20 (last 4 weeks)	430	46	10.70%	165	38.37%
02/11/20 (latest week)	216	26	12.04%	101	46.76%

17. The latest week data shows there was a total of 216 applications, the highest number of weekly applications since recording began in 2017 (59 regular recruitment and 157 for the Investigate First scheme). Approximately 1 in every 8 will successfully pass the recruitment process and join the Force.
18. Whilst now returning to normal levels, it should be noted that attrition reduced significantly due the impact of Covid-19; the Force originally projected that 25 officers a month would leave, however for the period April to October 2020 this reduced to an average of 18 a month.
19. April to October 2020, a total of 126 officers left (turnover rate of 3.28%); this was significantly lower compared to the same period last year where 179 officers left (turnover rate of 4.93%).
20. There are two further new officer intakes planned for the remainder of the financial year (18 January 2021 and 29 March 2021). Subject to attrition levels and budgetary requirements, it has been agreed that the January intake will be set at 50 officers and March up to 80 officers enabling the Force to exceed the 31 March 2021 establishment figure.
21. The Force has continued to recognise the importance of celebrating the officers' achievements by hosting passing-out-parades for them and their families, whilst maintaining their safety through the adoption of Covid secure control measures.
22. Please find below the diversity profile for police officers within the Force:

Diversity Category	Summary – 31 October 2020	Position as at 31/10/20	Position as at 30/03/20	Variance
Gender	31.91% (1237) female, 68.09% male	31.91%	31.31%	0.60%
Gender (self-declared)	0.05% (2) declared as transgender	0.05%	0.03%	0.02%
Religion	25.15% (975) declared a religion	25.15%	25.05%	0.11%
Ethnicity	3.64% (141) declared as BAME	3.64%	3.42%	0.22%
Sexuality	3.43% (133) declared as bisexual/gay/lesbian	3.43%	3.40%	0.03%
Disability	5.21% (202) declared as disabled	5.21%	4.98%	0.23%
Nationality	1.01% (39) declared not British	1.01%	1.61%	-0.60%
Marital Status	37.56% (1456) married or in civil partnership	37.56%	38.19%	-0.63%
Age Grouping	18-24: 12.13% 25-39: 48.43% 40-54: 37.46% 55+: 1.99%			

There may be under-reporting in relation to some categories as the information is self-declared and can be updated at any time

23. It should be highlighted that 141 officers (3.64%) self-declaring as BAME represents the highest proportion in the last 11 years.

Holding to account:

24. One of the principle ways the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.

25. Open to Panel Members and the public, on a non-participating basis, the meeting is chaired by the Commissioner and papers are submitted by the Force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers, and answer questions about delivery of the [Safer in Kent](#) Plan and policing generally in the county. In particular, through the ‘People’ paper, the Force provides a comprehensive update on officer recruitment; this includes the number of officers recruited, a breakdown by entry routes and overview of recruitment activity to date.¹

26. The Commissioner has, and will continue to also hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular 1:1 briefings which allow discussion of a wide variety of subjects.²

Recommendation:

27. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report.

¹ Due to Covid-19 the meetings are currently being held virtually and instead of papers the Chief Constable provides a verbal briefing. Unfortunately, due to technological constraints the public were unable to view the June and September meetings, but the Meeting Notes are available on the PCC’s website (as per normal).

² Due to Covid-19, currently being held virtually.

