

From: Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Police officer recruitment - update
Date: 24 September 2019



Introduction:

1. Earlier this year, in addition to requiring Kent Police to make a further £10m of efficiency savings, the Commissioner took the decision to increase the policing precept by the maximum allowable amount of £24 (14.2%) for an average Band D property. Whilst a decision not taken lightly, this was to enable the Chief Constable to recruit an additional 180 officers, increasing the total police officer establishment from 3,452.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) at the end of March 2019 to 3632.5 FTE by the end of March 2020. This will bring the Force back to 96% of its peak officer strength from a decade ago.
2. Of course, during the course of any given year, a number of officers leave Kent Police for personal or other reasons, such as retirement, change of career or ill-health – termed ‘natural attrition’. As a result, Kent Police’s recruitment plan has to factor in enough new officers to replace those projected to leave through natural attrition, as well as to achieve the increase in establishment.
3. This report outlines Kent Police’s recruitment plan for 2019/20 and updates on the number of officers recruited to date.

New officers:

4. To achieve the 180 uplift and replace those who leave through natural attrition, Kent Police has an ambitious plan to recruit up to 397 officers. This is designed to actually take the Force over establishment and provide a buffer to counteract the natural attrition expected in April 2020.
5. April to July 2019, 94 officers were recruited including 15 transferees from other forces or re-joiners; a further 88 officers joined on 12 August. Therefore, so far this financial year (April to August), the Force has recruited a total of 182 officers.
6. To achieve the establishment figure of 3,632.5 FTE, the Force has projected that it will require a further 189 officers; the recruitment plan is designed with an expectation that this will be achieved by January 2020.
7. Since the number of recruits required can only be determined once the actual number of officers leaving through natural attrition is known, the plan has some flexibility and can accommodate the training of up to a further 246 recruits if required.
8. Of the 182 officers who joined between April and August:
 - 6 were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), which equates to 3.30% of the total number that joined and is higher than the BAME officer percentage for the Force (3.27%).
 - 70 were female, which equates to 38.46% of the total number that joined and is higher than the female officer percentage for the Force (30.67%).It should be noted that this information is self-declared and can be updated at any time.
9. As at 13 August, the Force was processing approximately 628 ‘live’ applications at various stages within the recruitment process. Between January and August 2019, an average of 48 applications were being received per week, but since early July the average has increased to 57 per week.
10. Of the 628 ‘live’ applications:
 - 41 are from BAME applicants, which equates to 6.53% of all candidates. This is positive when compared to the current BAME officer percentage for the Force (3.27%). Of the 41 applicants, 1 is cleared and due to start in October and a further 4 have successfully completed the selection process and are now subject to the pre-employment checking phase. If all are cleared in time for the next intake in October, this would result in 5 BAME officers out of 82 joining, which would equate to 6.10%.
 - 203 female applicants, which equates to 32.32% and is higher than the female officer percentage for the Force (30.67%).

11. The Force also continues to proactively market transferee opportunities to join through specialised routes such as firearms, detective or on promotion. As at 13 August, there were 12 level transfer candidates in the recruitment process, of which 5 were cleared with a start date, and 7 undergoing pre-employment checks. A further 14 had registered their interest in the Force and were engaging with the Recruitment Team.
12. The deployment of officers is a matter for the Chief Constable, and Mr Pughsley QPM has determined that the uplift will be invested in the front line, with visibility, vulnerability and public contact forming the backdrop. Although it may be subject to slight change, the following shows Kent Police's overall planning assumptions:

	Number of officers
Local Policing Teams (Sections and/or Community teams)	43
Town Centre Officers	38
Vulnerability Investigation Teams*	51
CID (Visor Officers)	6
Chief Constables Crime Squad	10
Missing Children and Adults	19
Modern Slavery	5
Fraud	1
Citizens in Policing	4
Professional Standards Department	3

*Domestic abuse, rape, hate crime, stalking & harassment, child safeguarding and cyber crime

13. 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.
14. Those who join through the bespoke Investigate First Programme 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.
15. As Members will be aware, the Government recently pledged to recruit a further 20,000 officers nationally. At the time of writing, the finer detail, including what it will mean for police force's officer numbers is unknown.

Holding to account:

16. One of the principle ways the Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
17. 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.
18. The Force has, and will continue to provide a comprehensive written update on officer recruitment within the 'People' paper. This includes substantive updates on the number of officers recruited, breakdown by entry routes and overview of recruitment activity to date.
19. Chaired by the Director of Corporate Services, the Chief Finance Officer has an open invitation to attend the fortnightly Force Resourcing Board which is where key stakeholders maintain an overview of establishment management and consider requests for change in line with Force priorities, funding and threat, risk and harm. In addition it also provides oversight of key work streams aimed at increasing officer numbers and deals with any frustrations or barriers to achieving the overarching goal.
20. The Commissioner also has, and will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their weekly briefings. Held in the Office of the Commissioner, the briefings have a specific focus based on weekly themes and emphasis on recent activity, allowing for regular detailed discussion on HR and recruitment matters.