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## Efficiency spotlight report: The impact of recruitment and retention on the criminal justice system (February 2024)

Report: [2024-02-09-Joint-Efficiency-Spotlight-Report-1.pdf \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](#)

### Response from: Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Hampshire and Isle of Wight

Here in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, I pledged in my 2021 Police and Crime Plan to increase police officer numbers by 600 and I have surpassed this (I note the 31st March 2024 measuring date for the Home Office headcount number).

Our workforce are our most important asset. I recognise the challenges that come with increasing a workforce at pace, however, the commitment from our policing colleagues is exemplary and I commend my Chief Constable on his continued drive to uplift and upskill the workforce to work to keep our communities safe.

We know that the wider criminal justice system continue to experience challenges following the impact of Covid-19, with the report identifying:

*“The aftershocks of the pandemic persist, particularly in the Crown Court. On 31 December 2019, prior to the pandemic, the number of outstanding Crown Court cases was 37, 981. On 31 December 2022, the number was 62,485, reflecting the challenges of addressing the backlog and strike action by the independent Bar during 2022. The backlog has continued to rise to an unprecedented high of 66,547 cases in the three months to 30 September 2023. This has an adverse impact on all those involved in the CJS.”*

With an increase in police officers, this leads to an increase in crimes being investigated and criminals being dealt with. We are cognisant of these wider challenges and the need to prioritise the positive action taken by our officers to investigate crimes and bring those who harm us to justice. As Police and Crime Commissioner I will continue to work with my Chief Constable to ensure our work force are effective, efficient and keep our communities at the heart of policing.

**Donna Jones**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**

### Response from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary is committed to continuing to build a strong workforce for the future, enabling us to deliver an outstanding service to the public. We recognise the issues highlighted within the HMICFRS report and have put a framework in place via our People Strategy to address the issues raised and we will continue to prioritise and strive for a positive work environment for staff and officers who in turn will deliver our Force Priorities; the relentless pursuit of criminals, putting victims first and exceptional local policing.

HIOWC has already made good headway with the recruitment of police officers which includes the national police uplift programme; this has resulted in the recruitment of over 1000 Police Officers since 2020 and a net increase of over 680 officers overall by the end of March 2024. This has been

achieved with the support of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Further to this we have focused on key areas of business including our Contact Management Centre, ensuring establishment levels are achieved and retained by recruiting 175 new staff since April 2022 with a continuing upward trajectory for 2024-2025; demonstrating a commitment to the delivery of an excellent service when receiving calls from the public.

As a part of this work, we recognise the risks identified within the report including high attrition rates for those officers in early years of service. One area of work to address this is our effort to attract more transferees at rank, as well as a targeted recruitment campaign for military leavers acknowledging their transferable skillset. To ensure a continued effort in this area we have identified that this is a strategic risk and as a part of our response to this we are mapping our mitigation activity with governance and oversight provided by our Director of Human Resources and People Board.

One of the significant areas of concern raised with the HMICFRS report is the lack of detectives, this is a national, long-standing issue. The shortage of detectives in HIOWC has been registered as a force risk in terms of recruitment, retention and development of PIP2 investigative experience. A Gold Group has been stood up to address the risks and develop the ongoing approach to investing in this area of the business.

HIOWC has also wanted to make entry to policing as appealing and flexible as possible by offering various entry routes. This meets the Home Secretary's aim to offer a non-degree entry route which is less academic and focused on policing skills such as investigative training. Policing PLUS (military) works alongside the Armed Services Covenant (gold award holders) to attract ex-military personnel to join policing, bringing with them key skills such as teamwork, leadership, courage and commitment. The College of Policing has now accredited the Policing PLUS scheme as a trailblazer and we are working with the College under its new non-degree entry programme. This allows for a diverse workforce, reflecting the communities we serve, offering a range of experience, therefore able to meet the needs of the public when reporting a crime.

Recruitment and retention in other key roles continue to be a challenge, including areas such as; ICT, HR, Cyber and Analytical skills. This is especially challenging as other industries attract staff and potential candidates with those skill sets by offering higher salaries, terms and conditions. To start to address this we have used market supplements to make key staff roles more attractive and competitive in an effort to attract the right skills. Another avenue is to also have highly skilled Special Constables who in their voluntary capacity can assist the force in growth areas such as cyber-crime.

Recruitment timescales have been extended in the past year, this is partially due to the volume of recruitment undertaken over a short period of time as we aim to reach our ambitious targets for staff, police officer and volunteer roles but also due to vetting delays, which again is identified as a national matter. Delays caused due to vetting continues to be addressed by HIOWC and has been logged as a force risk, we are working to resolve this matter through recruitment of additional staff and out-sourcing. Retaining a high-quality approach to vetting is critically important to ensuring we have the right staff and officers working in our force, reflecting and acting upon our Code of Ethics and delivering a trusted service to the public.

HIOWC has also recently brought back into force our human resource and recruitment functions from the Shared Services Agreement with Hampshire County Council (HCC) and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire Services (HIWFRS). This will give us greater ownership and the ability to flex where needed and control of the mechanisms involved. The transfer has started with key teams returning in April 2024 and further changes beyond.

Within our People Strategy, the force has a retention strategy and delivery plan that ensures we continue to have greater insight into recruitment and retention patterns. We have developed mechanisms to more closely track and monitor all recruitment, establishment and leaver's data. This includes for example obtaining feedback from staff and officers via 'Say and Stay' interviews who indicate that they may wish to leave and exit interviews with staff who do leave/retire. We do see a number of our police staff successfully transfer to become officers and although they technically 'leave' us, they choose to stay with the organisation and go on to have diverse and fulfilling careers.

Furthermore, we have participated in academic research with the University of Portsmouth to consider why people leave, other than the expected factors of retirement and more attractive salaries in the private sector. This work, alongside our own internal research activity has contributed to the retention delivery plan.

The report also identifies the importance of staff wellbeing. This has been an integral part of HIOWC for many years with a comprehensive and diverse wellbeing offer to staff which provides both proactive and reactive care and support. Examples of this have included a 7- point plan for officers assaulted on duty and more recently over 600 male staff and officers have been provided with prostate cancer screening – this will continue to be an annual offer for men in the at-risk groups.

**Sam De Reya**  
**Deputy Chief Constable**

**Recommendations:**

No recommendations were made in this inspection report.