

Returner Scheme - Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Returner Scheme?

The Returner Scheme is designed to assist the force in the return of police officers with valuable skills and experience who:

- would otherwise retire;
- have retired from the force in the last two years.

The scheme allows a police officer to retire from the force but to then return as an attested officer after a short break of service, which must be a minimum of at least one calendar month.

2. Who can apply for the Returner Scheme?

Police officers that:

- A. have retired from the force in the last two years who had at point of retirement 30 years' pensionable service.
- B. are working in the force but have reached 30 years' pensionable service.
- C. are working in the force but are coming up to 30 years' pensionable service.

3. Can I apply if I have worked for the force for 30 years but not completed 30 years' pensionable service i.e. due to part time working?

No. You must have 30 or more year's pensionable service and hence be entitled to retire with maximum pension benefits (40/60ths) in order to be eligible for the Returner Scheme.

However, there is a re-joiner scheme for those who do not meet the criteria for the Returner Scheme which is open to all, irrespective of ability to obtain pension; please contact the Recruitment Department for further details.

There is also an extension to service option to allow officers to apply to remain beyond retirement age. Full details of this can be found in Protocol L11010 Retirement, Section 3.3.4.

4. What is the application process for the Returner Scheme?

- Application form to be completed (including support by an in-force sponsor)
- Comment by in-force sponsor
- Review of application form by selection panel
- Decision made by selection panel communicated to individual, subject to any necessary clearances

5. What is the selection process for the Returner Scheme?

All recommended applications will be considered by a Selection Panel. The panel will normally consist of The Director of HR (Chair), the relevant Assistant Chief Constable, a representative of

PSD, and HR Representative and the in-force sponsor who endorsed the application form. Part of that consideration will include the individual's discipline and attendance record.

6. Is there an appeals process built into the selection process?

Yes. There is an appeals built into the process, at which you can be accompanied by a force friend/Federation.

7. What will the medical assessment process?

You will need to complete a health declaration form, which will be assessed by Occupational Health. You may then be required to undergo a medical assessment by Occupational Health, which may involve a medical examination, prior to being able to join the Returner Scheme.

The assessment will be to ensure that you are fit and remain in satisfactory health for the role of a police officer.

8. Will I need to complete mandatory training in order to be re-engaged on the Returner Scheme?

Police officers will continue to be covered by all Policies, Protocols and Standard Operating Procedures relating to health and safety and training etc. Therefore, if you are in an operational role you must undergo mandatory training i.e. Personal Safety Training and where appropriate you will also be expected to pass the Job Related Fitness Test.

If your training is still in date when you are re-engaged, there is no need to complete training until the expiry date unless this is a specification of the medical advice.

9. Will I need to complete vetting in order to be re-engaged on the Returner Scheme?

If you have valid vetting clearance for the role or if you left the Force within 12 months and had valid vetting clearance for the role at the time you left, you will not need to complete a vetting form. The Force will complete vetting health checks and require you to complete a declaration regarding change of circumstances since vetting clearance was granted to assess your eligibility.

If you left over 12 months ago, your vetting will have expired and you will be required to complete a Force vetting form and apply for National Security Vetting clearance via the UKSV electronic link that will be sent to you. To prevent any delay to your return, once Force vetting has been completed, you may be given a conditional job offer subject to satisfactory National Security Vetting clearance.

10. When can I apply for the Returner Scheme?

Police officers that meet criteria at 2A and 2B can apply immediately. Officers that meet criteria 2C can only apply 3 months before they have reached 30 years pensionable service. If you have left the force you can apply immediately providing that you have had a break in service of at least one calendar month.

11. Will I still be a warranted police officer if I return under the Returner Scheme?

Yes. You will retain all of your existing powers when you return to work.

12. Will I retain my old force/collar number?

Yes. Arrangements are in place for officers to retain their existing force/collar number.

13. Can I return to my old role in force?

You will be posted to a vacancy in line with normal workforce planning practices. Consideration will be given if you have a posting preference, however, we are not able to make any guarantees as the business needs will take precedent.

14. Is there an end date for applications for the Returner Scheme?

The Returner Scheme is intended to be on-going but the force reserves the right to close it to future applications at any time.

15. Is there a maximum tenure period with the Returner Scheme?

There is no tenure period although officers will be expected to leave the force at their Compulsory Retirement Age, which is age 60 for federated ranks.

16. Can I apply for an Extension of Service beyond Compulsory Retirement Age to remain on the Returner Scheme?

Yes. Applications will be considered in line with the normal rules regarding an Extension of Service.

17. How much notice period do I have to provide if I want to retire from the force at a later date?

You would need to provide one month's notice to terminate your appointment on the Returner Scheme.

18. I would like to work part-time; can I apply for the Returner Scheme?

Yes. Applications will be accepted from part time police officers.

19. I was previously on adjusted duties; can I apply for the Returner Scheme?

Yes.

20. What is my annual leave entitlement on my return?

Your entitlement remain the same as it was immediately prior to your retirement.

21. I received rent allowance prior to my retirement; will I receive this on my return?

No. You are no longer able to receive rent allowance but you will receive South East Allowance in return. As South East Allowance will be less than the rent allowance that you received, we will allow you to partially abate your pension to ensure that overall you receive the same remuneration package. For information on a case by case basis please contact the recruitment delivery manager in the force you are applying to return to.

22. Do I have to live in the County to be appointed?

No. Due to the demographics of the police officers that the force will look to attract into the returner scheme, the organisation will not require you to live in the county.

23. Do I have to join a pension scheme on my return to the force?

In accordance with the Pensions Act 2008, the force will auto-enrol you in the 2006 Pension Scheme but you will have the option to opt out if you wish. For officers that enrol into the 2006 scheme, as they are taking their benefits after accruing maximum service, there will not be any pension accrued or medical pension accrued in respect of re-employment.

24. Why can I not join the 1987 Police Pension Scheme?

The 1987 Police Pension Scheme is closed to new starters.

25. Why am I being offered the 2006 Police Pension Scheme?

Applicable for police officers in the 1987 and 2006 Police Pension Schemes

There is a requirement that police officers that return to work after a gap in service, for the purposes of this scheme within two years of retirement from the force, must be re-enrolled into a 'final salary' pension scheme.

26. I was in the 1987 Police Pension Scheme; will I be eligible for further accrual under the 2006 Police Pension Scheme?

Police officers with maximum pension's benefits in the 1987 scheme will not be eligible for further accrual.

27. Can I 'opt-out' of the 2006 Police Pension Scheme?

Yes, although this must be your personal choice.

28. If I decide to 'opt-out' of the 2006 Police Pension Scheme, what will be my pension savings?

You will no longer making pension contributions of c.12% per month.

29. Will I still attract a pension abatement if I opt-out of the 2006 Police Pension Scheme and no longer make monthly pension contributions?

Your pension abatement is not affected if you opt-out of the 2006 Police Pension Scheme.

30. How is my monthly pension affected if I elect to join the Returner Scheme?

On retirement, you left the Police Pension Scheme (PPS) and received a tax-free retirement sum under PPS commutation provisions. You also now receive a monthly pension.

Participation in the Scheme will make your pension subject to partial or full abatement (reduction). This means that you will not be entitled to a proportion of the monthly allowance. However, when you retire from the force on a second occasion, your original pension will be reinstated in full.

This arrangement will have no impact on the size of any possible survivor's pension or on the size of a pension payable to your former spouse or civil partner under a pension sharing order. Individuals wishing to participate in the scheme are advised to obtain independent advice in relation to the impact returning to force will have on their pension and taxation situation, the force cannot take responsibility for any such matters.

31. Why am I not entitled to receive my full monthly pension?

If you return on the Returner Scheme, you will no longer be a retired police officer, therefore it would not be appropriate for the force to continue to pay you your full salary and a monthly pension at the same time.

32. Will the force make a lump sum payment in the event of death in service?

There is no lump sum payment made if you die in service unless you decide to remain in the 2006 Police Pension Scheme. Officers who choose to opt out of the 2006 pension scheme may wish to consider additional life cover.

33. What are the rules on injury awards, including awards for death as a result of an injury on duty?

Awards will be made as if you had at least 30 years' service uninterrupted by retirement.

34. I live in provided accommodation. Can I continue to stay on the Returner Scheme?

Individuals in Policing Housing will not be able to remain in the police house post retirement; acceptance onto the Returner Scheme will not affect the normal process for vacating police property upon retirement.

35. What are the tax implications for this scheme on my pension and lump sum?

Officers are solely responsible for ensuring that their tax affairs are in order and should take appropriate advice from an independent financial adviser.

36. I currently receive child care vouchers through salary sacrifice, will I still be able to claim these?

No, as the scheme is closed to new entrants, which is what you would be for these purposes.

37. I currently have a lease car on the green car scheme, can I continue with this?

No, the lease will cease on your retirement and you will be liable for any early termination fee that may apply.