

## L11010 Protocol - Returner Scheme - Police Officers

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### 1. Summary of changes

1.1 This is a new joint protocol for Essex Police and Kent Police.

### 2. What this protocol is about

2.1. The Scheme is designed to assist the force in the return of officers with valuable skills and experience who would otherwise retire or who have retired. The Scheme therefore allows continuation of service as an attested officer with early access to a lump sum, which makes the scheme attractive to some officers. However, its primary purpose is not to benefit an individual officer but to assist the force in the return and retention of those officers who have relevant skills to support the core policing priorities of the force.

2.2. The number of participants in the returner scheme will be reviewed regularly and the numbers of individuals permitted to return to the force will be determined by the overarching business requirement.

2.3. The scheme is designed to be as wide as possible to attract officers to fill roles based on organisational need; on this basis it is open to all ranks and decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

***Compliance with this protocol and any governing policy is mandatory. This protocol is not, nor is it intended to be, contractual.***

### 3. Detail the protocol

#### 3.1. Eligibility Criteria

3.1.1. The Returner Scheme is open for current Essex or Kent police officers or ex officers who retired from Essex Police or Kent Police to apply who fulfil one of the following criteria:

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

- Retired officers who are working in the force as police staff who have 30 years' pensionable police service and retired as an officer within the last two years.

The scheme is designed to be as wide as possible to attract officers to fill roles based on organisational need; on this basis there it is open to all ranks and decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

There is a re-joiner scheme for those who do not meet the above 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.

3.1.2. Additionally, officers wishing to apply for the Returner Scheme will need to show:

- There are no outstanding disciplinary proceedings being carried out in relation to their conduct and no previous disciplinary offences which have not been expunged and that they meet the required vetting clearances.
- Their attendance over the past 12 months is within the trigger points set within the Force's attendance management Protocol - L180 - under the protocol applications are normally rejected where an individual has been absent from duty through sickness over the previous rolling 12 month period:
  - 5 or more separate occurrences of absence;
  - Have a cumulative total of 15 or more calendar days of sickness absence;
  - Have a Bradford Score of 300 or more;
  - There is an apparent pattern of sickness.

Where this is not the case officers will have the opportunity to set out evidence as to why they should be accepted onto the Returner Scheme in order that the Force can consider whether it is possible and appropriate to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate the individual.

- The individual's latest Performance Development Review (PDR) is at least "meets role expectations" or higher and is not rated as having development requirements under the forces succession planning process.
- A supporting statement summarising their ability to perform their current role, including relevant skills, knowledge, training and a continued commitment to the force.
- The support of an in-force sponsor at the rank of Chief Superintendent or police staff equivalent.

3.1.3 If an individual is successfully accepted onto the Returner Scheme, the following will apply:

- Individual's must retire or have retired for no less than 1 month and no more than 2 years prior to returning.
- If the individual's vetting has lapsed they will be required to undergo necessary vetting procedures.
- All applicants will need to be assessed by Occupational Health to verify their suitability both for appointment and also in accordance with the Police Pension Scheme 2006 Rules.

- Individuals will need to be re-attested
- Re-engaged police officers will be subject to pension auto-enrolment in line with the Pension Act 2008.
- Compulsory retirement age limits apply to all officers on the Returner Scheme; and
- Extension of service rules will continue to apply for those wishing to remain in service beyond the new compulsory age of retirement for their respective rank, which is age 60 for Federated ranks.

### **3.2 Selection Process**

3.2.1 Offers wishing to be considered for the Returner Scheme must complete the standard application form.

3.2.2 The application form will need to be considered by an in-force sponsor who must be of the rank of chief superintendent or police staff equivalent. Where the officer is still in force this will normally be their Divisional/ LPA Commander or Head of Department; where the applicant is a Chief Superintendent their sponsor must be at least an Assistant Chief Constable or ACO. The in-force sponsor will be required to recommend the individual for acceptance onto the Returner Scheme or not. Where a recommendation is not given the in-force sponsor is required to set out in writing why this is not the case.

3.2.3 Where the officer has already retired an in-force sponsor will be identified who must be of the rank of chief superintendent or police staff equivalent; where the applicant was a Chief Superintendent their sponsor must be at least an Assistant Chief Constable or ACO. The in-force sponsor will carry out an interview against a set of performance based questions designed to ensure that the in-force sponsor is able to decide whether or not to recommend the individual for inclusion on the returner Scheme. Where a recommendation is not given the in-force sponsor is required to set out in writing what this is not the case.

3.2.4 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.

3.2.5 The Selection Panel will assess each application on its individual merits, taking into consideration the evidence of the individual's ability to perform in the rank and against the roles identified as having a need to be filled by experienced, skilled and trained officers. This will include reviewing any relevant information the force holds on the individual to confirm suitability to return to the force.

3.2.6 Dependent on the number of applications received for the Returner Scheme, the Selection Panel may apply selection criteria to decide on the number of police officers that are re-engaged. Officers who are not supported by the Selection Panel should be provided with the full rationale (in writing) as to the reason(s) for non-selection.

3.2.7 It should be remembered that because the Selection Panel will be seeking to match officer's skills to the number of prevailing vacancies that it will not always be possible to accept every officer onto the Returner Scheme.

### **3.3. Finance**

3.3.1. How Pay and Pension are affected upon joining the Returner Scheme are contained in the Guidance attached at the following link [\\*\(link to guidance document.\)](#)

### **3.4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

3.4.1 A range of FAQs can be found at the following link [\\*\(link to FAQ document\)](#)

#### **4. Equality impact assessment**

4.1. It is recognised that the application of this protocol to those eligible to apply are likely to have a disparate impact on disability and age diversity characteristics.

4.2 This protocol has been assessed with regard to its relevance to sex and age diversity equality. As a result of this assessment the protocol has been graded as having a low potential impact.

#### **5. Risk assessment**

5.1. Each Force will ensure that an assessment at the time that the Returner Scheme is opened to ensure that the costs incurred are balanced against the need to obtain and retain necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to operate effectively. This risk assessment will be updated at regular intervals to ensure that it remains cost effective.

5.2. There are significant organisational risks relating to the reputation and financial position of both Essex Police and Kent Police that would arise from a failure to effectively follow this protocol correctly.

#### **6. Consultation**

6.1. Consultation has been carried out with the following departments within Essex Police and Kent Police:

- Federation
- Superintendents Association
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Health Services
- Finance
- Business Centre

#### **7. Monitoring and review**

7.1. At the end of every period during which the Returner Scheme is open, each force will assess the costs against the necessity to obtain and retain necessary skill, knowledge and experience, consider the protected characteristics of those permitted to take part in the scheme to ensure that it operates in accordance with the equality Act 2010.

7.2 This protocol will be reviewed by, or on behalf of, the Head of HR every two years to ensure it remains accurate, compliant with legislation and remains fit for purpose.

#### **8. Governing force policy. Related force policies/protocols/linked operating procedures**

8.1. This HR protocol supports the overarching HR Policy L1.

## 8.2 Data Security

8.2.1 Essex Police and Kent Police have measures in place to protect the security of your data in accordance with our Information Management [Policy - W1000 Policy - Information Management](#).

## 8.3 Retention & Disposal of Records

8.3.1 Essex Police and Kent Police will hold data in accordance with our Records Review, Retention & Disposal Policy - [W 1012 Procedure/SOP - Records Review, Retention and Disposal](#).

8.3.2 Essex Police and Kent Police will only hold data for as long as necessary for the purposes for which we collected.

## 9. Other source documents, e.g. legislation, APP, partnership agreements (if applicable)

- [Guidelines on Conditions of Service for Part-time officers](#)
- [Health Declaration Form](#)
- [Vetting Form](#)

L1540 Protocol - Leave

**Protocol reference:** L 11010 Protocol - Returner Scheme - Police Officers

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