

COMPETENCE RELATED THRESHOLD PAYMENT SCHEME

Joint Report of the Chief Constable, Clerk and Treasurer

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek members approval for the implementation of the Competence Related Threshold Payment Scheme within Northumbria Police.

2 BACKGROUND

The Police Negotiating Board (PNB) Police Pay and Conditions Agreement of May 2002 introduced a new competence related threshold payment scheme. The scheme was agreed by the Federated Ranks Committee on 30 September 2002 and will take effect from April 2003.

The scheme is intended to reward experienced officers who are able to demonstrate high professional competence against agreed national standards. From 1 April 2003 officers in the federated ranks who have served a year at the maximum of their pay scale and who meet the required standards will qualify for an additional competence related threshold payment of £1,002 per annum. The payment will be taxable, pensionable and paid monthly.

Under the scheme it will be the responsibility of the eligible officer to make a formal application for payment by completing a standard application form.

Officers will then be assessed against the following four national standards:

- Professional Competence and Results
- Commitment to the Job
- Relations with the Public and Colleagues
- Willingness to Learn and Adjust to New Circumstances

Each of the national standards has associated criteria, twelve in total, against which officers' levels of competence will be measured.

Officers must summarise the case in support of their application by demonstrating competence against each of the twelve criteria, thereby demonstrating overall high professional competence. An assessment of the application will then be made by the line manager against the national standards and this in turn will be reviewed by the next level manager to determine whether the payment should be made.

A paper based appeals process will be available to officers whose applications are unsuccessful and a procedure will be put in place to ensure standards are maintained.

Although the vast majority of eligible officers are catered for within the standard provisions of the scheme, specific provision is also made to cater for the following groups of officers:

- Transferred and seconded officers
- Promoted officers
- Officers temporarily promoted
- Part time officers
- Officers on maternity leave
- Officers on long term sickness

The PNB Circular 02/17 and accompanying PNB guidance booklet set down the criteria which must be met to enable officers to access payments. The scheme has been agreed for national application within the police service and must be applied in accordance with the agreement.

Northumbria Police has implemented this scheme in full and in order to ensure it is operated fairly and consistently in force, has determined the following:

i) Commitment to Achieving High Levels of Attendance

Under the national standard “commitment to the job”, officers must demonstrate a commitment to achieving high levels of attendance. The force sickness policy will be applied during a period of two years preceding the date of application.

Any applicant who appears to be excluded from receiving payment due to his/her sickness record and is aggrieved, will be able to appeal in line with the force sickness management procedure.

ii) Compliance with the Code of Conduct

Under the national standard “professional competence and results”, officers are required to demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct. Under this Code the outcomes of no action taken, informal advice/warnings, formal advice/warnings or Superintendents warnings will not alone prohibit an officer from attaining a competence related threshold payment. Findings from a misconduct hearing within a period of two years preceding the date of application for payment will be considered on the merits of each case.

iii) Officers performing Acting Duties

Under the National Scheme, no provision was made for officers carrying out acting duties to the next rank. Northumbria Police has catered for this group of officers by adopting a 28 day rule, ie payment will only be withdrawn if an officer performs acting duties for a period in excess of 28 days, and this will be subject of a ‘no detriment’ clause whereby the officer does not suffer a reduction in his/her pensionable pay.

3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The scheme has been agreed nationally and is designed to be fair and consistent in its application to ensure that there is no discrimination. Application for payment under the scheme is open to all officers who meet the criteria.

4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The national funding assumption for this scheme is for 75% of eligible applicants to receive payment. Within the Police Financial Settlement, the Home Office has advised that the pay and conditions package agreed by the Police Negotiating Board, is fully provided for. However, there is no specific detail on the level of funding that has specifically been provided for Threshold Payments, nor of the assumptions made on the number of eligible officers.

Although national guidelines are for 75% eligibility, the Northumbria scheme is presently predicted to make the Threshold Payment of £1,002 to 90% of the 1,500 officers currently eligible. The estimated cost of these payments, inclusive of additional National Insurance contributions is £1.47 million in the first year of the scheme. Provision for this sum has been included within the draft Revenue Budget 2003/04.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Police Authority is asked to:

- i) Note the contents of this report.
- ii) Approve the implementation of the Competence Related Threshold Payment Scheme as outlined.