

# TAYSIDE JOINT POLICE BOARD

## PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE

26 November 2001

Report No PB 54/2001 by the Chief Constable

**SUBJECT: POLICE OFFICER - MANAGEMENT OF ATTENDANCE**

**Abstract: The Sub Committee is asked to note the terms of this report in regard to progress made with the management of attendance.**

### 1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Sub Committee note the contents of the report.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 With reference to Paragraph 5 Minute of Meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee of 29 May 2001 wherein the Sub Committee noted the steps the Force were taking to address Management of Attendance.

During the financial year 2000/2001, 14 police officers were retired on grounds of ill health.

### 3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Within the current financial year there have been six police officers retired on grounds of ill health.

The Force has also been subject to three appeals for injury on duty awards in the current financial year. Two cases are ongoing and the other was found in the applicant's favour.

The number of working days lost due to sickness absence for this period as compared to last year, is as follows:

|           | Police Officers | Support Staff |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------|
| 2000/2001 | 7319            | 2847          |
| 2001/2002 | 7365            | 3107          |

Whilst this does not show any significant change this is partly attributable to the reduction in ill health retirements which has meant a number of officers have experienced lengthy periods of sickness absence. Some of these officers have been rehabilitated back to work, and others have retired normally upon achieving their 30 year service. Also a number of officers have returned to work, not yet fully fit for operational duties but well enough to undertake a modified role. It is anticipated that this strategy will start to impact positively on the absence figures. Continued efforts are being made to reduce levels of both long term and short term sickness absence.

Steps which have been taken to achieve this include earlier intervention by line managers in offering support and assistance to retain officers at work; support and assistance being provided by the Force Occupational Physician and other external specialist services.

- 3.2 In conducting further research into absence trends and levels, the force was aware that additional management support was necessary on a short-term basis to assist line managers with the resolution of particularly complex cases. In recognition of this, for a temporary period only, a Chief Inspector has been seconded for six months to the Human Resource Department to revise the absence management policy, which was introduced in 1996. This will include identifying appropriate training needs and thereafter ensuring that the necessary training and awareness is provided to all staff involved with the management of attendance.
- 3.3 In an endeavour to receive further assistance on this matter a bid for additional funding from the Government's Work-Life Balance Initiative was submitted. The Force was successful in gaining funding through the Department of Trade and Industry's (DTI) sponsored Challenge Fund Project and a detailed project plan has been agreed in accordance with the criteria stipulated by the DTI. This will include consulting staff with the aim of gaining a more detailed understanding of the current situation within the force relating to work-life balance. This work will assist with the preparation of a number of policies with the ultimate aim of impacting upon short and long term absences.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of ill-health retirements in the current financial year is £301,777 in addition to the cost of injury on duty awards of £6,198. Provision for this revenue expenditure was made within the 2001/2002 Revenue Budget.

#### **5. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Divisional Commanders, Heads of Departments, Human Resource Services and Occupational Health Departments are continuing to seek to reduce the levels of reported sickness absence.

**6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Personnel Sub Committee is requested to note the position regarding ill health retirals and the continuing efforts with regard to sickness absence management. Further reports will be provided regarding the outcome of the initiatives outlined above, including the Work-Life Balance Project.



**JOHN D VINE**  
**Chief Constable**

Police Headquarters  
4 West Bell Street  
Dundee  
DD1 9JU

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NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.