

**Devon and Cornwall Police Authority Human Resources Committee
19 September 2007**

Open for the purposes of FOI
Report of Director of Human Resources

Alcohol and Drugs: misuse and testing policy – update report

Recommendations:

- (i) The committee notes the current position in relation to the implementation of the Alcohol and Drugs: misuse and testing policy.**
- (ii) Considers whether any points require further action.**
- (iii) Receives a further update in 6 months.**

Introduction / Summary

1. The Police (Amendment) Regulations 2005 introduced legislation enabling the testing for substance misuse of certain members of the force. Firearm officers, high speed pursuit trained traffic officers, police divers and search teams are specifically mentioned in the legislation as well as new recruits and probationers. The Chief Officer may also identify other groups within the force as being vulnerable because of a specific responsibility for dealing with drugs, i.e. undercover officers and test purchase officers.
2. A force policy, (D311), has been prepared following wide consultation. At this stage it applies to police officer posts only as the trades unions await the findings of a Police Staff Council enquiry into the issue of Alcohol and Drugs testing in general. This enquiry is believed to be reporting by the end of this year and at that time the policy will be reviewed in terms of the inclusion of relevant police staff posts.
3. A report on alcohol and drugs testing was discussed by the Police Authority Human Resources Committee on 24th January 2007 and was endorsed for implementation. The Authority requested an update on the progress made and a comparison with similar policies in use by other organisations.

Background Information

4. The progress towards implementation of the policy is as follows:
 - Research has been conducted in other forces where the alcohol and drugs testing is already implemented and good practice identified.
 - Comparison has taken place with those forces already conducting alcohol and drug testing as well as those who are about to implement their policies to ensure that we are consistent in our procedures. Contact has been made with a total of 16 other forces who have drug testing in place and another 7 forces who are in the process of introducing the measures.
 - A budget of £50K to cover the cost of this years implementation and testing has been obtained.
 - The tendering process for selecting the company who conduct analysis of samples taken for testing has been completed and a company called 'Medscreen' was successful. A number of forces and other organisations use this company for the collection of samples for testing, the laboratory analysis and the professional interpretation of test results.
 - The testing of new recruits as police officers, police and community support officers and special constables will commence in the October 2007 intake

- The Occupational Health Support Unit will take hair samples from new recruits during the medical examination stage of the recruitment process.
 - The random testing of firearm officers, tactical pursuit and containment officers, search teams, divers and those involved in certain disciplines in the drugs field will be undertaken by 'Medscreen' and commence in September 2007. Liaison officers have been established for each of these groups and the procedures communicated to the force.
 - The number of officers within the groups to be tested is just over 400 and in the first 6 months from the implementation of the policy it is estimated that at least 50% of that number will be subject of a random test.
5. It is suggested that the Authority may wish to receive a further update in 6 months time.

Contact: for further information

Phil SINCOCK

Force Vetting Manager

01392 452343

philip.sincock@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Sponsored by Director of HR