

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority HR Committee

21 November 2007

Open for the purposes of FOI

Report of Director of Human Resources

Exit from Employment

Recommendation:

- (i) The Committee to receive the report and confirm their support for the current process and actions**

Introduction

Process

1. Each person leaving the Force is sent an Exit from Employment questionnaire by his or her HR Unit on receipt of notification of resignation. The Exit from Employment form is based on the Home Office recommended questionnaire. The process is supported by D267 Exit from Employment policy.
2. Due to the volume of leavers (454 during April 2006-March 2007) and their geographic spread, around 1 in 3 leavers are offered a face to face meeting with a member of HR to complete the Questionnaire; for those who are not offered a meeting by HR, there is still an option to request one. There are also options to meet with a union or staff representative, a representative of a staff support group, or to complete the questionnaire independently and return it anonymously. Independent completion is the option most often used. The Home Office recommends that the line manager does not take part in the exit from employment meeting.
3. Questionnaires are returned to the relevant HR Unit where they are screened for local issues and to determine if any of the responses constitute a grievance against the Force. The data from all questionnaires are input and analysed by the Strategy, Policy and Performance Unit.
4. The analysis is presented to the Human Resources Performance Group (HRPG) annually and a short interim report is prepared every six months. Members of the HRPG agree any action to be taken.
5. Annually, the Home Office is supplied with data about people leaving in terms of number of leavers; length of service; reason for leaving; gender; ethnicity etc. However, none of this is drawn from the Questionnaires.
6. It is important to note that in 2005/2006 only 36% of leavers returned the form (it is not compulsory) and in 2006/2007 this figure dropped to 21%. Therefore, the views reflected may not be a true representation of the views of all leavers.

Data – All data relates to financial year April 2006 to March 2007 unless otherwise stated.

1. The number of police officers leaving the force has reduced from 5.1% to 3.5%. The 30+ retention scheme enables officers with 30 years' service to request to take their 'lump sum' and carry on working for up to 4 years. The number of officers being retained through the 30+ retention scheme is increasing and now stands at 50; this has a positive effect on retention. In addition, police officer retirement ages have been increased from age 55 to age 60, and for senior ranks from age 60 to age 65. This will also have a positive effect on retention in the longer term.
2. Police staff turnover increased from 11.5% to 12.8%. However, interim analysis of data from April 2007-September 2007 shows that police staff recruitment is now 45% higher than police staff leavers. This may have been influenced by restrictions on recruitment being relaxed. This will continue to be monitored.
3. The following observations were taken from those who returned the questionnaire:

2006/07	2005/06	Variance +/- %	Feedback
99%	93%	+6%	Felt that the relationship with their colleagues was adequate or better
96%	91%	+5%	Felt that the relationship with their line manager/supervisor was adequate or better
91%	80%	+11%	Felt that the relationship with their tutor/trainer was adequate or better
82%	71%	+11%	Felt that the relationship with senior management was adequate or better
75%	73%	+2%	Felt that the recruitment process was adequate or better
74%	74%	0	Felt at the initial induction was adequate or better
66%	55%	+10%	Were given recognition for the achievements
62%	55%	+7%	Felt that the PDR process was adequate or better
61%	62%	- 1%	Felt that they were provided with positive feedback/guidance
60%	57%	+3%	Felt that they were made to feel valued

4. The following observations were taken from those who returned the questionnaire.

2006/07	2005/06	Variance +/- %	Reason for leaving
23%	14%	+9%	Domestic Reasons ,Work/life balance
18%	11%	+7%	Retirement
15%	17%	-2%	Other
13%	6%	+7%	Found another/better job
7%	6%	+1%	Joined Regulars
5%	4%	+1%	Role/workload
5%	12%	-7%	Training/Career Development Reasons
3%	1%	+2	Discrimination/Bullying, harassment
3%	1%	+2%	Blank
2%	1%	+1%	Management Issues
2%	14%	-12%	Pay and Conditions
2%	1%	+1%	Fairness @ Work issues
2%	1%	+1%	Organisational Culture
1%	1%	0%	For promotion
0%	3%	-3%	Personal Reasons
0%	3%	-3%	Transferred to another Force
0%	5%	-5%	Relationship with Colleagues

Action

1. Action has been taken to increase the number of face to face exit from employment meetings offered from 1:6 to 1:3; the questionnaire has been revised, the policy D267 Exit from Employment has been updated. Early indications show that the number of returns is increasing; during the past 6 months a return rate of 34% has been achieved.
2. 13% of police staff joiners left the organisation during their first 12 months of employment. This could be as a result of recruiting the wrong people to the wrong roles or that induction into their roles or the organisation was inadequate. The HR input into the police staff induction process has been revised and now encourages feedback on the recruitment and induction processes, and invites suggestions as to what could be done better. This information is fed back to the Head of HR Services for dissemination and action by the central recruitment team and local HR Units. Locally, information is further disseminated to line managers as appropriate.
3. The monthly management information figures show that the greatest number of starters and leavers are within the Criminal Justice and Call Management and Communication Departments. The recruitment and induction processes for these roles have been reviewed and telephone interviewing has been piloted as part of the selection process where this forms a major part of the roles. Consultation has taken place with current role holders as to what they see are the most important qualities of new recruits to these roles and this has influenced a change to the interview questions.
4. As a result of a number of leavers citing work/life balance as the reason for leaving we have reviewed the part-time and flexible working policy. All officers and employees can apply for a flexible working pattern and 99% of applications during the year have been approved. The policy and guidance on requesting a flexible-working pattern is on HR Expert.
5. Any suggestion that leavers have witnessed or experienced bullying at work is taken seriously. The Fairness @ Work policy has been revised and more information is available to managers and staff on dealing with allegations of bullying and harassment. ACAS guidance on bullying and harassment is available on HR Expert along with links to ACAS for free on-line training.
6. The recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce is a priority for the Force and it is disappointing when a member of an under represented group leaves. It is encouraging to note that the number of known minority ethnic leavers has reduced from 5 in 2005/6 to 2 in 2006/7 despite an increase in the total number of known minority ethnic staff employed. Nonetheless, positive action is being taken to encourage applicants from under-represented groups to apply. Financial assistance is provided to Staff Support Groups, which provide a voice for under-represented groups in the organisation and a means for feedback to management.

Conclusion

1. HR recognises that while the data collected through the Exit from Employment process is not definitive, it provides valuable information which is not looked at in isolation but forms part of a suite of management information that aids planning, decision making and action.

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