



Scottish Police Federation

5 Woodside Place Glasgow G3 7QF

JCC Circular 27 of 2017

Ref: CS/KB

5 July 2017

Dear Colleague

Police Pay – Information

I refer to the above and the very significant recent political and media attention being given to the wider subject of public sector pay.

I appreciate that the nuances created by different governments having different responsibilities for pay can create some confusion. This confusion isn't eased by different parts of the public sector being subject to different considerations depending on their geography. In the paragraphs that follow, I hope to help untangle these complexities and lay out for you the position with the pay claim for police officers in Scotland.

Public Sector Pay Policy

There are in fact two public sector pay policies; one created by the UK Government and the other by the Scottish Government. It is important that this is understood as any talk of removing/retaining the public sector pay policy may not be relevant to Scotland or (depending on where pay is determined) any particular sector of the public sector in Scotland. For example police pay is subject to separate considerations in Scotland to the rest of the UK whilst firefighters pay continues to be negotiated at a UK wide level.

In truth and bar minor differences the two government's pay policies have been identical for many years. This is perhaps not surprising given the dependencies between public spending in Scotland and that in the rest of the UK.

At the time of writing the Prime Minister has given every indication that the UK pay policy will be retained. This is despite a growing level of criticism at the policy by many, including senior members of her cabinet.

Also at the time of writing the Scottish Government has announced that it will lift its public sector pay cap **from next year**.

But what does this mean?

It is important to recognise that police officers in Scotland have never technically been subject to either the UK or Scottish Government public sector pay policies. Police pay across the UK

was subject to negotiation at the Police Negotiating Board (PNB) up to 2014. In 2014 the PNB (as a UK wide body) was disbanded and replaced with a pay review body in England and Wales. This change immediately resulted in police officers in England and Wales being subject to the UK Government pay policy.

The Scottish Government retained a PNB for Scotland's police officers and as negotiation is at the core of the PNB, it could not be subject to a unilaterally applied pay policy in Scotland.

The position therefore is that regardless of the Scottish Government announcement on lifting its public sector pay cap from next year, that police pay in Scotland for 2017/18 is subject to negotiation.

Is there anything else that might be relevant?

Today (5th July 2017) it has been announced that the Fire & Rescue Services National Employers offered firefighters a 2% basic pay increase from July this year and a potential further 3% increase in April 2018. You will note that this appears anomalous with the UK Government public sector pay policy but like the police (for the whole of the UK prior to 2014 and for Scotland since) firefighter pay is subject to negotiation and as such is not technically subject to the UK Government Pay Policy.

It will be interesting to learn how firefighters react to this offer and given the political dynamics, how both the UK and Scottish Governments deal with the expectations created by it.

Also today, the Prime Minister indicated that her Government had accepted recommendations from a number of pay review bodies.

You should be aware that recently published papers by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) have indicated their budgetary assumptions for 1% police pay increases each year till 2019/20. You will also be aware that the Police Service of Scotland (PSoS) has notified the SPA that it expects a budget deficit of £47Million for 2017/18. In addition Audit Scotland have warned of a funding black hole of nearly £200Million for policing during the term of this (Scottish) parliament.

You have now said "technically" twice – what do you mean by this?

It is important to recognise that Government's ultimately retain absolute control over the use of public finances. They are also the final arbiters of what is considered to be "in the public interest." Governments can decide on any question of affordability if they consider this is in the public interest. In short if government considers any pay recommendation or award (whether recommended by a PRB or agreed through negotiation) is "unaffordable", it can set aside or revise the award.

As a consequence and whilst firefighters, and police officers in Scotland were not subject to the public sector pay policies per-se, their pay awards for the last number of years, have been in line with the policy. This is not the first time this has occurred and cross public sector pay "policy" has impacted on police pay awards in the past. It is inevitable that at some point in the future that it will do so again.

What about police pay for 2017?

The Staff Side of the PNB in Scotland (comprising representatives for the federated, the superintending, and the chief officer ranks) have submitted a claim for an increase of 3.5% for all police officer pay points (and appropriate allowances) from the 1st September 2017. This claim was carefully considered by the staff side prior to its submission and was formulated with the following in mind;

- Police officer remuneration to be fair and to be seen to be fair.
- Police officers occupy a demonstrably unique position in the public sector.
- As such and given the unique demands placed upon police officers, pay increases should not be limited to those applied to other workers
- Police officers have limited employment rights
- Police pay has lost considerable real terms value in recent years

In addition Staff Side also claimed for the removal of the four “free half-hours” of overtime in any week.

The claim was formally laid with the Official Side of the PNB (comprising representatives from the Scottish Government, SPA, and the PSoS) on the 13th June 2017.

What happens next?

It is important to recognise that for any negotiation to proceed, confidentiality has to be maintained. At this time the claim has neither been accepted nor rejected. The respective sides of the PNB continue to negotiate the Staff Side claim. Once or if there are significant developments these will be communicated to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Calum Steele', with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

Calum Steele
General Secretary