

Candidate enquiry – December 2020

How big is the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, People and OD Team?

PCC election board response

Introduction

This briefing note responds to a question posed by a Police and Crime candidate who enquired “*how big is the Avon and Somerset Constabulary HR, People and OD Team?*” The figures in Full Time Equivalent (staff and police officer) numbers are set out at appendix 1 alongside the pay and non-pay budgets. The People and OD Directorate is one of four enabling services directorates and it is made up of several departments as listed. The total budget is c. £16m which represents 4.86% of the total budget for the organisation.

Background context

HR Operations

To understand these numbers it is useful to have some context in relation to what these departments comprise and what they do. There is also value in understanding the operating realities and constraints that affect the resourcing of these functions and our plans in relation to further savings and efficiency.

The HR Operations Department is made up of payroll, talent acquisition, business partnering, advisory and helpdesk, alongside resourcing/rostering and workforce planning. In recent years, much of this operation was provided through South West One. When that was formally disbanded the resources were returned to force and there was an attempt to join the Multi Force Shared Service which did not materialise. We therefore reconfigured to deliver the services in-house and this present operation is smaller than its predecessors.

We have been working this year to address outmoded and inefficient systems and processes for example through the introduction of a modern e-recruitment system and use of robotics process automation. The next stage of our digital transformation will reshape our capabilities, processes and technology to replace the outmoded ERP and DMS systems that have been in place for many years. We see a focus on greater automation, self-service, improved user experience, digital golden record and integrated planning powered by better technology and data analytics tools. This presents significant further opportunities, building on our strong foundations of the past 18 months, to realise efficiency and financial savings alongside improving the quality of service.

There are at least three significant operating environment factors that have played their part this year in raising the level and complexity of demand and the resultant level of adaptability and flexibility required of our HR Operations functions. These

include the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the myriad of practical and policy implications to flow from that; the substantial programme of uplift in police officer numbers; and, the management and delivery of a number of significant service and technology change projects at organisation-wide and departmental levels.

It is also possible to look at the resourcing of the function through the lens of the HMICFRS Value for Money profiles. The data here is based on 19/20 so it is a bit out of date in that it was pre the impact of but it does provide a guide to how costs compare to other forces nationally.

May also be worth referring to HMICFRS VFM profiles¹. These are a bit out of date (based on 19/20 budget – which in both cases I think means that they were shown net of planned savings which have subsequently been written off as a consequence of Uplift delivery and MFSS decision), but provide a guide to how costs here compare with other forces nationally.



Learning

¹ Link to full set is – <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/article/value-for-money-inspections/value-for-money-profiles/value-for-money-dashboards/>

The learning department provides the whole breadth of training and learning and development opportunities covering statutory, mandatory and operational requirements alongside fundamental, intermediate and advanced learning necessary to achieve authorisations, qualifications and role-based competence. It has an excellent reputation locally, regionally and nationally and has shown considerable ingenuity, flexibility and agility in re-configuring the delivery modes and methods to accommodate Covid-safe practices in a year that saw amongst the highest training delivery volumes on record for the force.

The department supports, delivers and coordinates core policing skills for example for Police Constables, PCSOs and Specials as well as custody training. There is a supplier partnership relationship that is managed here with the University of the West of England around PCDA (Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship) and the DHEP (Degree Holder Entry Programme). During the last year to eighteen months significant work has gone into procuring and standing up this new provision and gaining College of Policing validation for this completely new mode of initial learning. We did this ahead of most forces in the country placing us in a strong position in terms of delivering uplift and providing progressive, high quality, multi-year programmes.

In addition to core policing, the department delivers a variety of critically important operational training including using of Taser, Public Order (e.g. riot), Personal Safety (e.g. handcuffs) and First Aid. Refresher and repeat training is delivered at defined frequencies to ensure minimum requirements are met and assurance that we have a safely competent and effective workforce. Our trainers and educators are well qualified and highly experienced. We operate to a number of national standards in line with the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice.

Alongside the core and operational training and learning provision, the department plays a key role in the development of leadership and specialist skills within the workforce and particularly those requirements associated with the National Police Promotions Framework. This is an essential component of the national requirements underpinning promotion and progression of officers. We ensure our own learning and training function is properly qualified and support the Award in Education and Training (AET) and the Certificate in Education and Training (CEAT). We recognise that for managers and supervisors as well as at different levels, leadership development is important to their effectiveness and leading and managing teams and whole functions and thus we also invest in a range of upskilling and broader development opportunities to support this.

Within the department, we also focus on development of a range of technical skills including ICT training, Driver Training, the Video Unit and Hydra through which we offer immersive learning and simulations. We also support the development of those who are coming to us as transfers and re-joiners. The modes of learning for all the strands mentioned above blend the best of face to face, digital and remote learning methods, group and independent learning and reflective practice in line with modern approaches to development. The department is also responsible for

oversight and management of our special regional firearms training centre and provision at Blackrock.

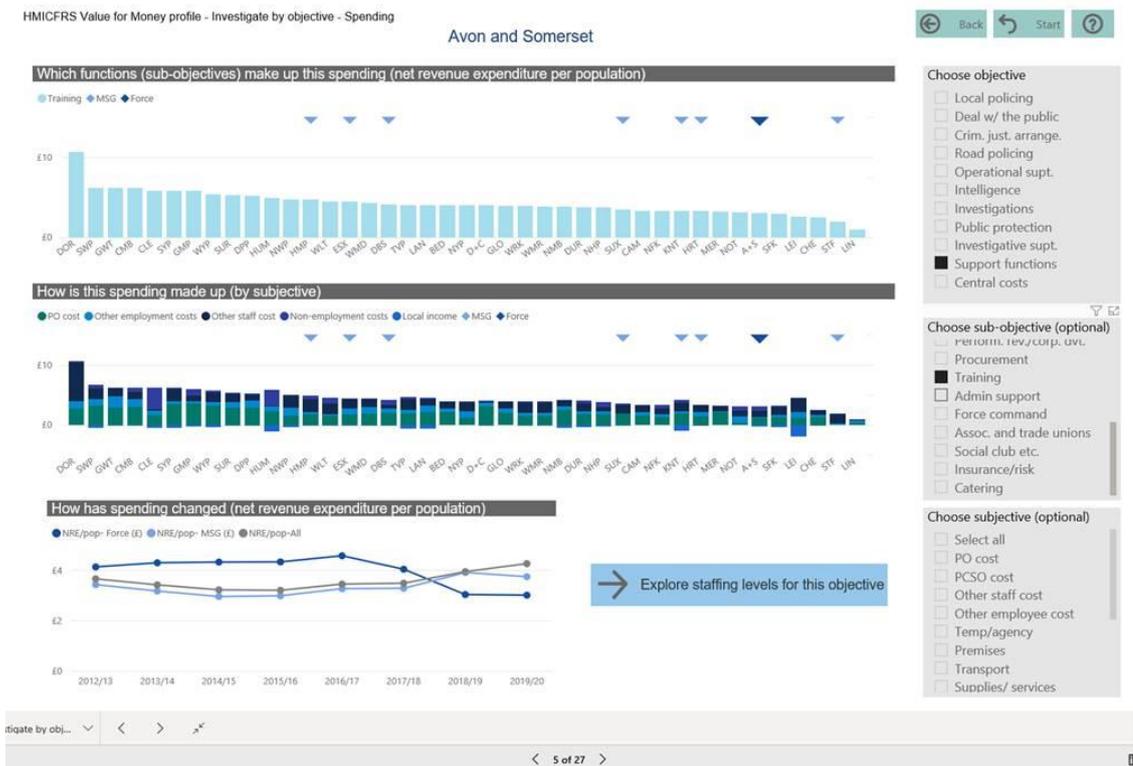
The demands placed upon the function have increased substantially in recent times with the introduction of new national requirements, new systems and of course in the past two years linked to the uplift programme which has seen 400+ over police officers go through in the past two years – over double the amount the force has ever had to manage before. It is notable that the training commitment to develop these student officers to fully competent is now three years with the complexity surrounding the logistics of tutoring through on the job training, academic study and support at a higher education level and multiple cohorts starting at different points in any one year.

400 extra police officers equates to 800 extra College of Policing requirement for two days training (per person) for yearly refresh of first aid and personal safety training. There is also been additional pressure on meeting qualified driving provision for Emergency Response capability. The force decision to uplift Taser establishment from 450 to 650 has meant 200 extra officer training days as per requirement to refresh skills every 12 months. There has also been an increased requirement for PIP1 and PIP2 Investigative skills for every operational member of staff, to meet new challenges presenting staff in relation to Cyber Crime and Vulnerability. We've put a greater focus on developing Investigators for the future. As technology support within Policing grows (Agile Tech; Smart Phones; Body Worn Cameras; wider reliance on data collection and analysis), so too has the need to provide more training for staff to use these safely and effectively. There has also been an increased requirement for providing Firearms training across three forces.

In the short to medium term, the implementation of a new and modern skills and training admin system called Chronicle will bring in efficiencies. Some of these will relate to administration of training and as the data sets improve we will see better workforce planning of skills and competence across all of its key operational roles. The introduction of the new system, the new processes and ways of working and new capabilities associated with optimising the system has been an important project that has required resource, focus and attention during this year.

As recruitment of operational staff moves to a more normal footing, post uplift achievements, we will look to make savings and efficiencies. Some of these will be linked to assessments and tutoring, which aims to merge capacity and skills across the department, but also with a view to reducing the burden of this task on those carrying out their day to day role alongside nurturing new staff. It should also be noted that the department has hitherto brought in an income of c. £400K to the organisation, though this has been suppressed this year due to the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

As above, HMICFRS Value for Money profile can be used to benchmark our position in relation to other forces. The caveat is the same as above in relation to this data being for 2019-2020 period.



Organisational Development

The organisational development unit is a focused on progressing strategic change to our workforce to promote increased engagement, wellbeing, productivity and performance. The capabilities it brings to research and analysis, organisational design and people-centred change helps us to be a progressive, high performing, well-led organisation.

During the past year we have won a number of high profile awards for the work that the OD team has led on behalf of the organisation. This included winning in the CIPD People Management Awards 2020 for the best technology in HR initiative, the winner of the neurodiversity category and running up in the inclusive category for the Employer Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) national awards, as well as achieving Disability Confident Leader status and the becoming the first police for to achieve the National Equality Standard. We've also seen the impact of its work coming through sustained and significant improvements in our annual people survey. These developments and improvements go beyond the day to day activities of HR, helping us to ensure that we are sustainably effective and fit for the future in an ever changing operating environment.

The work programmes this year have focused amongst other things on wellbeing and welfare support, inclusion and diversity, leadership development, people analytics using our annual and pulse surveys, development of policy and practical responses to enable us to respond to the implications of the pandemic and a programme of outreach to build trust and relationships and to recruit more people from

underrepresented communities. As well as these the team supports a vibrant and active network of employee resource groups. Our OD activity has also included redesigning HR activity such as induction, the exit process, IPR, and piloting new recruitment approaches as well as building a 'job families' approach to clearer police staff career pathways. The function also supports work to ensure we meet various compliance requirements such as for Gender Pay Gap reporting. We are currently engaged in an important piece of work that will shape the resetting of ways of working post-Covid.

Occupational Health

Due to the importance we place on physical and mental health and wellbeing we have a dedicated Occupational Health Unit consisting of a Force Medical Officer, Psychological Support Advisors, a Senior OH Nurse Adviser, Occupational Health Nurses and a small number of support staff. The team provide guidance to line managers when supporting employees back to work and reasonable adjustments to make their working pattern and working environment suitable. The Psychological Support Advisors provide a proactive, comprehensive and confidential therapeutic, trauma and psychological support service. This will involve the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy. In addition we offer Employee Assistance Programme support, which includes an option for up to six sessions of face to face counselling as well as access to online health resources. We also offer Neyber, a financial wellbeing service. In terms of dedicated staff we also employ a TRiM Co-ordinator to manage our TRiM process, training and monitor support needed.

In response to the Covid pandemic the Occupational Health Unit is following HMG guidance where possible. Face to face meetings have ceased which has meant the cessation of all routine medicals. The only exceptions are DVLA medicals for those needing to drive minibuses or heavier vehicles. All work that can be done using video link has continued. This includes management referrals, participation in specialist committees, counselling and psychotherapy. Questionnaire based medical screening with biometrics and physical examination are deferred until it is safer to undertake them. Inevitably the number of overdue medicals is building up; and the backlog of PCDA medicals alone are now up to 200. A recent review increased our psychological support capacity by one whole time equivalent which will help meet some of this commitment.

Health and Safety

We have a small unit of two professional staff that ensure we effectively manage health and safety and associated risk management and mitigation and compliance practices across the force. They support the Health and Safety Committee. In addition to compliance they deal with the management, investigation and lessons learned process to flow from incidents and ensure we have a good grasp on the management information, standards, procedures and training necessary to ensure

we meet our duty as an employer and our commitment to good practice in health and safety across all aspects of what we do as an organisation.

Legal Services

Legal Services no longer sits within the People and OD Directorate Structure but reports directly to the Deputy Chief Constable. However, some information about its current work is provided below to set the information about the function in context.

A key priority for legal services has been to educate and support officers in relation to the use of civil prevention orders in order to protect the most vulnerable, as well as where criminal proceedings may not provide an immediate solution. This has included initiatives to raise awareness of the various civil prevention orders but also a more proactive approach to the innovative use of such orders.

There has been a notable increase in the volume and complexity of demand for police disclosure requests from the family courts. This is not only as a result of the CPS requiring greater disclosure before making charging decisions, but also increased requirements in the family proceedings themselves. In recognition of this we have invested in additional resources to meet this demand as well improving operational efficiencies through better use of technology.

We have also seen a steep increase in the number of Subject Access Requests (SARs) received. Pre GDPR (May 2018) the monthly average received was 40 SARs. Post GDPR in 2018 the monthly average rose to 71. In 2019 the monthly average rose to 89. Demand has continued to increase and additional resources have been allocated; enabling the organisation to move from a position of low compliance, necessitating a self-referral to the Information Commissioners Office, to a significantly improved compliance rate averaging at 97%. The demand for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, as well as the complexity of requests, is gradually increasing. In 2017 there were 1,596 FOI requests, in 2018 it had risen to 1,633 and in 2019 we received 1,619 requests. The figures alone do not reflect the increased complexity of the requests made, the number of questions raised in each request or the considerable amount of time required to collate responses.

Improving Information Governance across the organisation is a current priority and we have recently invested in a number of new posts to improve compliance, enable more effective information sharing with partners and to support the forces' strategic ambitions through the lawful use of data analytics. A restructure of the Information Management capability has recently been approved to place all information management teams within Legal Services which will enable greater oversight and scrutiny of these areas by the force SIRO and the Strategic Information Governance Board.

We are making greater use of technology to manage all work types in the extended department, which is enabling a greater oversight for performance management as

well as monitoring demand. Performance measures are being introduced across the department with compliance rates being the key measure in the areas of data protection and FOI. Due to the enhanced use of technology for demand management it is now possible to monitor compliance against court orders in family proceedings. Further performance measures for the legal team are being introduced this year to monitor client satisfaction and service delivery standards which will complement the organisational learning which is already captured by the department and fed back into the organisation.

Appendix 1: FTE and Budget for People and OD Directorate

People & OD (2020/21 Budget)					
	FTE	Pay	Non-Pay	Total	
HR Ops	120.96	4,420,000	649,600	5,069,600	
OD	10.90	595,100	415,400	1,010,500	
Learning	138.36	6,631,400	626,500	7,257,900	
Legal	32.15	1,267,100	290,100	1,557,200	
Occ Health	11.81	879,600	90,100	969,700	
H&S	2.00	92,900	11,400	104,300	
	<hr/>	<hr/>			
	316.18	13,886,100	2,083,100	15,969,200	
	4.86%	of the total Force budget			