

Statement from the Commissioner regarding police officer pay

Tuesday, 21 February

Statement from Sir Mark Rowley:

We are a prestigious police service with an envied global reputation but one that has become tarnished. We are now urgently and determinedly reforming, explicit that part of this mission requires us to be ruthless with those that our systemic failings have allowed to corrupt our integrity and undermine public trust.

But I also need to recruit, develop, motivate and retain the talent of tens of thousands of fantastic men and women who desperately want to rebuild the trust of Londoners. This is becoming increasingly hard – perhaps not surprising when a cost of living crisis lands on top of a 17 per cent real terms decrease in pay over the past ten years for frontline officers.

Further difficulty comes in the context of London's current pay landscape - I know others are also struggling to grow.

We have formally submitted our evidence to the Pay Review Remuneration Board, part of the evidence process behind decisions on police officer pay. We have set out our case to support this year's pay award for officers.

I want to explain a recommendation which I think some may question, that officers should receive a pay award that is close to the current rate of inflation. Our submission makes plain that achieving this must come with additional government funding, otherwise we will be forced to have fewer officers.

We have recruited nine and a half thousand officers in the past three years but the pool of potential candidates is reducing and I fear we may be up to a thousand officers short by April.

We have encouraged reviews by other forces and the Home Office and are already adopting best practice where appropriate to improve the situation. I have also taken account of evidence from officers of hardship and how pay and reward is a factor in our growing exit rates of young officers.

It is in this context that I have made such an exceptional recommendation. This is not about benevolence or sentimentality to my officers but simply about being calmly business like about what it will take for me to deliver the quality of policing that Londoners deserve.

I am also mindful that my officers do not have the same voice that other employees have. By law, they are not allowed to strike and indeed don't want to strike.

They are still turning out around the clock 365 days a year when others strike and cause disruption that makes policing more difficult.

I am also pushing for pay reform which is likely to be less popular with many in policing. It is not tenable for us to be one of the few employers whose pay

arrangements are based more on rewarding how long someone has been with us rather than their skills, performance and values.

This has been discussed for a long time but little progress has been made, not least because of the resistance of many chiefs and the Police Federation. This must change if we are to deliver the best policing possible.

We recognise the real terms degradation in pay also impacts our police staff, who undertake equally important operational roles, dealing directly with members of the public and victims of crime. In line with our approach to next year's pay award for officers, the Board will be equally pressing to seek sufficient government funding to make a comparable case for police staff.

Rather than skirting around the storm surrounding the Met when I arrived as Commissioner, I have confronted the most difficult issues we are facing head on. I am steering this organisation directly through it.

However as we reform, I need support to recruit and retain those that will be the change that drives us towards renewing policing by consent.