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Via email

12th October 2020

Dear Mr Shah

Thank you for your letter dated 03 September 2020 to the Commissioner about the very important issue of how the Metropolitan Police Service supports retired officers. The Commissioner has asked me to reply on her behalf.

The mental health and wellbeing of our workforce is a priority for us and I am pleased with the progress which has been made in recent years, not just within the MPS, but across the wider public to raise awareness of mental health and break down the barriers to discussion. As you rightly note both physical injuries and mental health challenges do not disappear when our officers retire and how we can continue to support and provide assistance to those who need it is something we have been considering in recent years.

Current Provision

Whilst serving, officers are able to access treatment and rehabilitation for physical injury and mental health disorders through our Occupational Health service. This includes access to counselling services and more specialist psychology support. Many of our officers also pay a small monthly contribution to Flint House, our Police Rehabilitation Centre, which provides excellent physical rehabilitation and mental health treatment. There are also staff support networks such as the Mental Health Network and Blue Light Champions who both raise the profile of mental health issues and also support colleagues in need.

The Occupational Health service is a workplace support service and is not designed to care for people after they have left the MPS.

Should retired officers require treatment this would be accessed via the NHS as the primary care provider. What we do ensure however, is that where we become aware of retired officers that need support we signpost them both to their GP but also charities such as Samaritans, Mind, Hestia and Rethink Mental Illness. Support available includes

counselling, 24 hour crisis lines, recovery cafes for evening and weekends and specialist financial support services for those struggling with mental health problems.

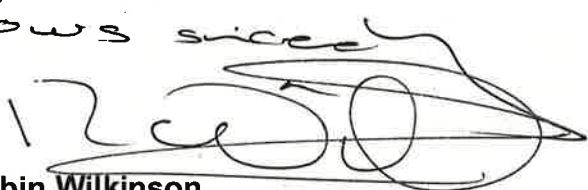
I am encouraged to see that support for improving the provision to retired officers has also been raised by the National Association of Retired Police Officers (NARPO) and Police Care UK. There are plans to build a new Centre of Excellence in Harrogate as a National Facility to support the psychological needs of current and retired officers and staff. The initiative is a collaboration between the charities Police Care UK and Police Treatment Centres with funding from both organisations and a grant from the LIBOR fund. The new Centre will focus its efforts on building resilience to better support the wellbeing of officers and staff and providing access to treatment that reflects the needs of policing, including Post Traumatic Stress. This will be a national specialist facility to support all regions of the UK. I understand that the building works will be completed during 2020 with the charities aiming to pilot the new treatment service by early 2021.

Police Covenant

Earlier this year the Government launched a public consultation on the Police Covenant and subsequently on the 8th September 2020 the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP confirmed this would be enshrined in law.

The aim of the Covenant is to acknowledge the sacrifices made by those who currently serve or have previously served in the police and to ensure that both they and their families are not disadvantaged as a result of that service. The covenant will acknowledge our responsibility to provide protection and support to the police and to mitigate the impact of their service on day to day life or in their access to justice. Further details are awaited. However, we hope this new ambition will be a significant step forward and improve provision of support to our retired officers even further.

In summary whilst I acknowledge that there is much to do, I am confident that we are making progress and will soon see changes brought in via legislation to improve provision to retired officers even further. We will continue to work with the NPCC and Government on issues connected with the Police Covenant. However, I would of course be happy to meet you to discuss these issues further if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely


Robin Wilkinson
Chief of Corporate Services