



Police Staff Council

Delivering Effective Employee
Relations for Police Forces



What is the Police Staff Council?

The Police Staff Council (PSC) was established to provide a voluntary collective bargaining mechanism for Police staff within England and Wales. It represents PCCs, Chief Constables, the Home Secretary and the employees of PCCs and Chief Constables. Collectively this covers around 50,000 police staff and PSC meetings are held quarterly.

The PSC consists of fourteen members and ensures a representative voice from staff, management and the public. There are seven members on the Employer's Side including representation from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the Home Office and seven on the Trade Union side covering Unison, GMB and UNITE.

The PSC in its current format was considered within the Winsor report which concluded that *"...there is a strikingly high measure of consensus that the Police Staff Council works well. No major proposals for its reform have been suggested."* There were no recommendations for substantial change within the Winsor review.

The Police Staff Council Employers' Side Secretariat is funded through a grant over a three year period (2016-19) from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). The role of the Secretariat is to lead formal and informal negotiations with the Trade Union Side on pay, conditions of service, and other related employment issues.

A National Framework with Local Flexibility

The PSC provides a national pay spine and core conditions of service but allows employers to use the pay spine flexibly.

Police Forces have the flexibility to select the most appropriate job evaluation schemes with the factors and weightings that they deem are the most important. Jobs are evaluated through these local schemes and aligned to a local pay and grading structure within the national pay spine. Market factor supplements are also a mechanism open to Forces to use flexibly within their own pay schemes to ensure that there is control by Forces to match the local labour market.

Increasingly police forces are seeing the benefits of comparable pay and conditions in respect of collaboration.

A Forum for National Negotiations

National negotiations on pay and conditions remove the necessity to conduct those negotiations on a force by force basis and all the duplication of effort that represents.

National pay bargaining takes away the need for local Forces to have their own reward and benefits teams responsible for negotiations. This acknowledges that not every Police Force has the capacity, skills or funding to conduct local negotiations on pay and conditions.

Local negotiations may result in differing outcomes for Forces which would create conflict and unrest for Police staff who may see neighbouring Forces with more favourable pay settlements and benefits. This would create retention and recruitment issues and would impact on workforce morale and engagement and exert upward pressure on the annual pay settlement.

National collective bargaining provides Forces a level of protection from collective disputes and grievances escalating to formal disputes and ballots for industrial action. This ultimately protects the Force operationally. The Trade Unions have demonstrated over many years that ballots and threats of industrial action are not a preferred course of action within the existing collective bargaining framework. The PSC has a track record in reaching agreement rather than entering into long standing disputes.



National Expertise

The PSC Employers' Side Secretariat provides national knowledge and expertise. Without the PSC Forces lose access to that expertise and industrial relations knowledge.

The Secretariat advises and gives clarity on the interpretation of national and local agreements, to achieve consistency of practice throughout Forces. It also consults with their members on topical issues to gain feedback with a much broader spectrum.

The Secretariat also provides advice and support to forces on terms and conditions and related HR issues and acts as employer's representative to conciliate and mediate in local and national industrial disputes in order to achieve resolution and develop a stable industrial relations climate.

Affordable Pay Awards

The PSC has a track record of delivering pay awards that are affordable for employers and credible to employees. National collective bargaining is the most effective method of coming to an agreement that all parties are happy with.

It is anticipated that future pay negotiations will be much more difficult in future years. The Trade Unions submitted an inflation busting pay claim for 2017/18 which is indicative of the growing dissatisfaction with public sector pay and this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, making future negotiations more challenging.

National pay discussions also allows Forces to distance themselves from negotiations and the negotiations become less about how the Force is perceived to view and value its employees and more about a national process to ensure the best possible deal is reached nationally.

Advisor to the Government

The PSC advises the Government of any issues, both current and forthcoming affecting Police Staff to bring these issues to a national platform. Without the PSC, there would be no single forum to raise such issues directly with the Government.

Effective Industrial Relations

The PSC provides a forum for employers and employee representatives to meet on a regular basis. Unison holds the view that in the main the PSC is an effective and successful collective bargaining body, which has delivered stable industrial relations for the Police Service since its creation. As a result it can be regarded as an equitable system because of its equalised power between employers and employees. Through the PSC meetings, common ground between the Unions and the Employers' Side is usually met and the PSC has a track record of avoiding disputes.

Although negotiations happen centrally, the results are transparent and circulated via either employer or joint circulars to all Forces.

Delivering Reform

The PSC is working on reforming the terms and conditions of police staff through a pay and reward review. It acknowledges that many of the current agreements are outdated and do not reflect the modern and flexible working practices that Forces aspire to have.

Phase one of this reform was delivered in April 2017, which was a revised national agreement of terms and conditions. The PSC is now looking to consult with police forces to help inform and develop the next phase of reform looking at how police staff pay is determined and administered.

This will be delivered by experienced national negotiators working on behalf of Forces.

In Summary

The PSC is the only body that can provide a coherent and joined up approach for national negotiations on pay and conditions for the vast majority of police staff. The PSC remains committed to delivering modern and flexible terms and conditions of employment and a stable employee relations climate for the benefit of both police staff and Forces. Going forward this requires a strong, engaged and committed Employer membership.

**Contact the Police
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