

More than 3,000 extra officers join police in recruitment drive

Police ranks across England and Wales have been bolstered with an additional 3,005 officers since the government launched a major recruitment drive, according to figures released today (30 April).

The figures follow the launch of the government's campaign in September 2019 to recruit 20,000 extra officers over the next three years.

They show 3,005 recruits joined the police specifically as part of the uplift programme. In total, forces recruited 6,435 officers from November 2019 to March 2020, including recruitment planned before the government campaign was announced.

The statistics show that forces across England and Wales have successfully accelerated their recruitment plans and are on track to meet their target of 6,000 by March 2021.

There are now a total of 131,596 officers, a 5% increase on March 2019 – of which uplift officers account for approximately half.

This morning, the Home Secretary held a Zoom call with new recruits at Lancashire Constabulary, where she thanked them for stepping up to join the police and protect the public, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Each one of these brave officers will make a difference in helping to cut crime and keep people safe. For many, their first role has been to join the fight to stop the spread of coronavirus, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thanks to new digital assessment centres, the doors remain wide open for anyone who wants to join them and make a difference in their community.

Getting more police officers on the streets is an absolute priority for the British people – and this Government.

The College of Policing has announced it is rolling out new online assessment centres, which will ensure that recruitment continues during the coronavirus outbreak.

The college's online assessment process will take candidates through situational judgement tests, briefing exercises and interviews. The first forces, including West Midlands and Hampshire, are already trialling this platform and the service will be launched nationally in June.

New recruits are receiving tailored training so they can be safely deployed to the frontline and support the police's emergency response as soon as possible.

College of Policing CEO Chief Constable Mike Cunningham said:

The recruitment figures released today are extremely encouraging and demonstrate the scale and breadth of the positive work that has been undertaken so far to increase police officer numbers.

The numbers joining the service show that huge progress is already being made to recruit an additional 20,000 officers over the next three years. This investment in the workforce provides a great opportunity to enhance diversity across the service and the College of Policing will equip those joining with the skills and training needed to match the complexity of the job.

The College of Policing is working hard to enable forces to continue to recruit during the current emergency by introducing online recruit assessment and other measures to help get officers on the streets so they can keep their communities safe.

Figures from the NPCC showed that overall crime fell by 28 per cent in the first few weeks of the coronavirus outbreak.

Alongside new recruits the government has recently announced other measures to support the police's coronavirus response.

These include testing for all essential workers, including police officers and support staff; the relaxation of tax rules to encourage officers nearing retirement and those recently retired to serve; and the unlocking of £84million for forces to use in fight against coronavirus.

National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) Chair Martin Hewitt said:

With over 3,000 additional officers already joining policing in the past seven months, we are well on our way to meeting our target of 6,000 by March next year.

Working with the Home Office, we are making every effort to keep recruitment of officers going despite all the challenges coronavirus brings. Creative solutions from the College of Policing will help to ensure this momentum is not lost and that recruitment and training can continue during the pandemic.

APCC Chair Katy Bourne OBE said:

The positive latest figures for police officer recruitment show that police forces are being innovative in the face of adversity,

adapting assessment and training procedures to safely manage the onboarding of the maximum number of new recruits.

Although we know that the volume of many crime types has fallen due to travel and social restrictions, crime is like water, it always finds a level and the pandemic has created the circumstances for other crimes to mushroom. When there are more people back on the streets there will, sadly, be more crime so we still need those additional police officers that the public have been calling for.

The government's Uplift programme will ensure that all police forces have the numbers they need for business as usual and the increased demand of policing safe, social interactions.

It also shows that there are plenty of people from all walks of life with diverse skills and experiences who want to become police officers at a critical time for our country and join the frontline in our collective endeavour against COVID-19.

Our citizens quite rightly would prefer to see police targeting criminals and preventing crime rather than moving people on from beauty spots. However, having put so much effort into the stay at home campaign over the last five weeks, we still need a police presence to deter those whose impatience and recklessness could spoil it for us all.

The recruitment drive is at the centre of the government's commitment to back the police with more resources, powers and support to keep communities safe.

Other steps include the biggest funding boost for the policing system in a decade, a new covenant to recognise the service and sacrifice of the police, funding to provide over 8,000 more officers with Taser to keep themselves and the public safe, expanded stop and search powers, and plans to consult on increasing the maximum sentence for assaulting police officers and other emergency service workers.

Rail replacement vehicles: extension of non-accessible period

- Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
- If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.

Lord-Lieutenant for Midlothian: 30 April 2020

Press release

Queen appoints new Lord-Lieutenant for Midlothian.



The Queen is pleased to appoint Lieutenant Colonel Richard Callander LVO OBE TD as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Midlothian to succeed Sir Robert Clerk Bt. OBE who retired on 3rd April.

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CMA to investigate concerns about cancellation policies

Through its Covid-19 Taskforce, which monitors market developments and identifies the big problems facing consumers, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has seen increasing numbers of complaints in relation to cancellations and refunds.

These now account for 4 out of 5 complaints being received into the Taskforce and so far include concerns about businesses refusing refunds or firms pressuring people to accept vouchers for holiday accommodation, which can only be used during a more expensive period.

Based on the complaints received, the CMA has identified 3 sectors of particular concern:

- weddings and private events
- holiday accommodation
- nurseries and childcare providers

It will tackle these areas as a priority and then move on to examine other sectors, based on the information received by the taskforce.

The CMA acknowledges that most businesses are acting reasonably in what are unprecedented circumstances, and the current crisis is placing everyone under pressure, but consumer rights cannot be ignored.

If it finds evidence that companies are failing to comply with the law, the CMA will take appropriate enforcement action, including moving quickly to court if a firm does not address its concerns. Individuals can also take their own legal action against unfair terms should they choose to.

As well as examining specific sectors, the CMA is [issuing a statement](#) on its views on consumer protection law in relation to cancellations and refunds during the current crisis.

For most consumer contracts, the CMA would expect a full refund to be issued where:

- a business has cancelled a contract without providing any of the promised goods or services
- no service is provided by a business, for example because this is prevented by the restrictions that apply during the current lockdown
- a consumer cancels or is prevented from receiving the service, for example due to the restrictions that apply during the current lockdown

It also advises that businesses should not be profiting by 'double recovering' their money from the Government and customers.

Andrea Coscelli, CEO of the CMA, said:

Our Covid-19 taskforce is shining a light on some of the big issues facing consumers in wake of this pandemic. Alongside price-gouging reports, we're now seeing cancellation issues in their thousands. So far, the CMA has identified weddings, holiday accommodation and childcare as particular areas of concern.

The current situation is throwing up challenges for everyone, including businesses, but that does not mean that consumer rights can fall by the wayside. If we find evidence that businesses are

failing to comply with consumer protection law then we will get tough – that means launching enforcement cases and moving to court action where there is a strong reason to do so.

If people have been affected by unfair cancellation terms in wake of Covid-19, they can report them to the CMA using the [online form](#).

Whilst the CMA is not able to respond directly to every complaint it receives, the information provided will help the CMA to decide which issues to address as part of this rolling programme of work.

Notes to Editor

1. The [Covid-19 Taskforce](#) was launched on 20 March to scrutinise market developments, identify harmful sales and pricing practices as they emerge and take enforcement action if there is evidence firms may have breached competition or consumer protection law.
2. Protecting consumers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic: [update on the work of the CMA's Taskforce](#).
3. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA) and the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CRA prohibits the use of unfair terms in contracts between businesses and consumers. The CPRs prohibit unfair commercial practices by businesses towards consumers.
4. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

[Another 900 British travellers in New Zealand set to return to the UK](#)

Press release

Around 900 more British travellers in New Zealand are set to return home on three additional UK Government-chartered flights.



The most vulnerable people will be prioritised for the flights, scheduled for the 11 and 15 May from Auckland, and 13 May from Christchurch.

Flight details are as follows:

- 11 May – Auckland – London Heathrow
- 13 May – Christchurch – London Heathrow
- 15 May – Auckland – London Heathrow

The Government has already organised five charter flights which will bring home from New Zealand around 1,555 travellers between 24 April and 2 May. In addition, a further 3,700 people have flown home on commercial flights – with the support of the British High Commission in Wellington.

Lord Goldsmith, Minister responsible for New Zealand, said:

These three additional UK-chartered flights from New Zealand will bring home around 900 British travellers, in addition to the 1,500 we flew back on our first five flights.

We recognise that this has been a challenging time for Britons in New Zealand and we are grateful for their patience as we have worked with the authorities to deal with a complex logistical operation to make these flights happen. Our High Commission staff are working incredibly hard to support both those British travellers who wish to travel home, and those who remain in the country.

British High Commissioner to New Zealand Laura Clarke said:

We are doing all we can to help British people get back home to the UK, and these additional charter flights will help more people to do that.

My team and I will continue to do all we can to support those who are still in New Zealand, throughout this crisis and beyond.

The £75m partnership with airlines announced in March has enabled us to return thousands of Brits through special chartered flights. We will continue to work closely with the airlines to help as many British travellers as possible to get home to the UK, including through commercial means.

Notes to editors

1. Eligible British travellers in New Zealand will be contacted by the High Commission to book their flight.
2. Vulnerable people are classified as those over the age of 70, those under 70 with an underlying serious or complex health condition and those who are pregnant.
3. For those not currently eligible to book on these charter flights, support remains available from High Commission staff in New Zealand.
4. Tickets for the flights will cost £800. Those unable to afford travel costs and have exhausted all other options may be eligible to apply for an emergency loan from public funds.
5. Since the outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan, we have helped more than a million British citizens return home on commercial flights – backed up by our work with the airlines and foreign governments to keep flights running. A £75m partnership with airlines announced by the Foreign Secretary on 30 March has enabled us to return thousands more on special charters.

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