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HMICS reports on attendance management in the Scottish police service

Study highlights progress made and recommendations for improvement

The thematic report on attendance management published today by the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (HMICS) highlights the positive trend in reducing sickness absence across the police service in Scotland. With an average working time lost of 4.3%, police officers in Scotland have a lower rate of absence than the 4.5% recorded for police officers in the UK as a whole¹. In the UK, those working in health (4.8%) and local government (4.7%) exhibit higher rates.

With approximately 85% of police revenue budgets taken up by staff costs, people are the Scottish police service's most valuable resource and HMICS has made recommendations that can bring about continued improvements in managing staff attendance. These include:

- Force specialists working together at a national level to develop and share good practice.
- A change in statutory regulations to extend the range of options available to manage the unsatisfactory attendance of police officers including, when all other avenues have been exhausted, the sanction of dismissal.
- Making better use of available data and information analysis to further reduce absence and its associated costs.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Mr Bill Skelly said:

"It is important that Scottish police forces and the Scottish Police Services Authority seek not only to support those who are sick, but continue to develop a culture where staff are motivated to attend work.

"While the forces and SPSA have made good progress in recent years, I have made five recommendations to support continuous improvement. I look forward to seeing these improvements delivered during the next 12 months."

Background

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland (commonly known as HMICS) is responsible for inspecting the eight Scottish police forces and the constituent services provided by SPSA. HMICS operates independently of the police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Government and exists to monitor and improve the police services in Scotland.

¹ Absence Management: annual survey report 2009, CIPD
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.scotland.gov.uk

To obtain an advance embargoed electronic copy of the HMICS Thematic Report on Attendance Management journalists should contact Communications Justice on 0131-244-5033.

Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Mr Bill Skelly is available for interview.

Contact

Mark Hannan: 0131-244-3073/07870-218112