

## Nearly 5,000 police get both pension and salary

Almost 5,000 retired police officers who have been re-employed by their old force are receiving both a pension and a salary paid by the taxpayer, figures have revealed.



Photo: PA

By Melanie Hall

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The officers are 'double dipping' into the public purse by receiving both a generous monthly pension and a salary from their new job, with one force having more than one in five of all civilian staff jobs carried out by former warranted officers.

Critics said the arrangements showed officers could retire too early, but the Police Federation, which represents rank and file officers, said forces benefited from the set-up because their new staff were already highly experienced.

As police officers can retire after 30 years' service, it means many are still in their 50s when they retire.

But many decide to remain in work and even return to their old forces, despite generous final-salary pension arrangements.

The officers are part of a growing number of public sector workers who have retired as early as 50 with gold-plated index-linked pensions, and then go back to work with their old employer, the Daily Mail reported.

In contract, many private sector workers will have seen their own pensions eroded, and are forced to work past their retirement age to pay the bills.

Around 6 per cent of civilian jobs were taken up by retired officers, meaning nearly 5,000 roles such as call handlers, front desk clerks and more specialist back-office functions are filled by former officers, according to a survey of police forces.

Among those senior officers 'double dipping' is Andy Trotter, the Chief Constable of British Transport Police, who earns £150,000 at his current job and receives a further reported £70,000 a-year in pension, having retired from another force.

There are ten police forces around the country where more than 10 per cent of civilian posts are taken up by retired officers who are topping up their pension with an additional salary, according to the figures.

One force, Dyfed-Powys in south-west Wales, has more than one in five of all civilian posts filled by ex-officers.

Some 22 per cent of the 655 civilian posts were occupied by retired officers, the survey found.

A total of 226 former officers hold civilian posts in Leicestershire Police, while the Humberside force employs 238 former officers in civilian roles, and 231 are working for the South Wales force.

The other forces where 10 per cent of civilian roles are filled by retired officers are Lincolnshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, Cumbria, Wiltshire and Derbyshire.

Matthew Sinclair, chief executive of the TaxPayers' Alliance, said: 'Police pensions cost taxpayers a fortune, as the amount officers pay in during their career don't stack up to cover the bill for the generous provisions they receive.'

'Police officers retiring must either claim their pension or a salary if they continue to work for the force, not both.'

'They shouldn't be allowed to double dip receiving both at taxpayers' expenses.'

'If so many officers are eligible for pensions and still able to work it suggests that the retirement

age for the boys in blue is too low and that the taxpayers footing the bill are getting a terrible deal out of the arrangements.”

A spokesman for the Police Federation said retired officers who went back to work for their old forces were providing a benefit to the public.

“During the span of their careers police officers do an extremely difficult and often dangerous job,” said the spokesman.

“At the end of this they are rightfully entitled to retire from service with a pension, towards which they pay a 13.5 per cent contribution.

“If a retired officer wishes to do a civilian post this is not only beneficial for the service but also the public as it retains the knowledge and skills gained and uses these in a complimentary and important support function.”