

Scottish Police Authority Chief Executive John Foley expected to retire early



The chief executive of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) John Foley is expected to retire early from his position in October, when the SPA accounts are signed off.

Earlier this year, a review by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland described a “fundamental weakness” at the board. .

The HMICS report into the authority, also found “positive signs of improvement” over the last 18 months, with improved relationships between the SPA and Police Scotland but it was highly critical of the approach which had led the SPA to meet in private.

Mr Foley joined SPA in August 2013 as interim Chief Executive with management responsibilities for both the SPA’s governance and statutory forensic services responsibilities, and was formally appointed permanent CEO later that year.

His early retirement comes under the terms of the approved SPA Voluntary Redundancy and Early Retirement scheme applicable to all eligible staff affected by a material change to their role, and commensurate with his age (over 55) and length of service (4 years).

Although the CEO role becomes redundant from 1 September 2017, the Board has given consideration to the most appropriate point for the accountable officer responsibilities to transition, including seeking the view of Audit Scotland. As a result the Board requested that Mr Foley remain in post until the conclusion of the 2016-17 SPA accounts. To ensure it has

contingency against any change to that timeframe, the Board has also agreed a payment to Mr Foley in lieu of his contractual notice period as part of his overall settlement.

While it is not possible at this stage to calculate a definitive figure on the overall financial settlement until Mr Foley's formal leaving date is confirmed, SPA has agreed with Mr Foley that the costs of his financial package will be made publicly available as soon as practical after that leaving date.

SPA Chair Andrew Flanagan said: "This new reporting arrangement is a further tangible step in strengthening oversight of forensic services, and will support work to develop a long-term strategy for forensics to complement the 2026 strategy for Police Scotland.

"I want to pay tribute to the professionalism which he has shown throughout our consideration of this, and indeed for the valued service he has given to SPA and policing over what has been a period of unprecedented change."

John Foley added: "The SPA has continued to evolve and improve since its inception in 2013 and strengthening the governance of Forensic Services is the next stage of that journey and one I fully support. Clearly the revised arrangements have significant implications for the CEO role I currently hold and following detailed discussions with the Board since the start of the year I have chosen to seek early retirement.

"It has been an honour and privilege to have served as the first permanent CEO of the SPA for the past four years. I am confident that the Authority and policing will continue to improve in the coming years and I want to thank all of the staff and officers who I have had the pleasure of working with over the past four years."

The SPA will, in the coming days, conduct a process seeking a 12-month secondee to act as chief officer for the SPA. A 12-

month tenure will allow the review underway of the SPA's wider executive requirements to be completed, the HMICS thematic inspection of the SPA to report next spring, and for a new SPA Chair to be appointed.

Scottish Labour's justice spokesperson Claire Baker MSP said: "John Foley has made the right decision in stepping down. His position had become increasingly untenable, and it is clear that change at the top was needed.

"Under the SNP's management of Police Scotland we have seen critical reports, a Chief Constable under investigation, the resignation of the Chair of the SPA, and now the loss of its Chief Executive.

"The Scottish Government must now use this opportunity to completely overhaul the SPA to ensure it has the confidence of the wider public. We need to see greater openness and accountability, and the new Chair and Chief Executive must be approved by Parliament."