



The Police Treatment Centres

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) FOR RETIRED OFFICERS THINKING OF DONATING TO THE POLICE TREATMENT CENTRES

INTRODUCTION

On 1st August 2015 the PTC Board of Trustees directed that with effect from the 1st January 2016. Retired Officers will be eligible for free treatment only if they are a current donor to the PTC. There have been a number of questions around this policy change and the FAQ List below tries to answer the main ones.

LIST OF FAQs

Q. Why has the PTC decided that they are now going to ask Retired Officers to pay a donation to the PTC in the future?

A. The PTC must generate enough income to cover its running costs. The PTC is a class leading facility that has a superb range of treatment, facilities, and equipment. It costs £3.8million per year to run the PTC, and despite our efforts to closely scrutinise every penny spent costs have inevitably risen and our income has reduced. We have to ensure that the PTC generates enough income to cover our annual running costs and we anticipate a significant funding gap in the near future as a result of reducing police officer numbers.

Q. Are Retired Officers still welcome to apply for treatment at the PTC?

A. Yes absolutely, we have always valued the attendance of Retired Officers at the PTC who add to the atmosphere and ethos of who we are and what we do. We want this to continue in the future. The existing rules on eligibility will apply with Serving Officers retaining the priority for admission, and the only difference is that if Retired Officers wish to apply for free treatment at the PTC in the future, they must be current donors.

Q. Why has income for the PTC reduced so much in recent years?

A. The PTC has lost 5000 police officer donors since 2010 due mainly to reductions in officer numbers. This has resulted in an annual loss of income of £338,000 for the PTC. Forces are expecting further cuts of up to 20% in officer numbers which will further impact on the number of our donors and annual income. Many of you will be Officers who signed up to the PTC along with a range of other services without thinking too much about it, but were glad that you did so. The current generation of Serving Officers are less likely to do so, and therefore we have fewer police officers donating to the PTC. Donations by Retired Officers will help replace some of this lost income and ensure that the PTC remains in existence for the long term allowing it to continue to provide treatment for both Serving and Retired Officers.

Q. Why can't you just reduce costs?

A. The PTC introduced a procurement policy to ensure that the Charity received best value for all of its supplies and services. As a result the charity generated £300,000 worth of cash efficiency savings between 2009 and 2013. As these were the result of renegotiating contracts and the way we operate they are one offs. It costs £3.8million to provide the treatment and services that we do, and we believe that it is important not to compromise on the work and treatment that we provide, but there is very little room to cut costs further without reducing the service.

Q. When will this change be introduced?

A. The new policy will be introduced from 1 Jan 2016. If you wish to apply for free treatment after this date, you will have to be a current donor.

Q. How much will the donation rate be?

A. It will be £0.65 per week. This represents half the current value of serving officer donations, and we believe it represents excellent value to be eligible for free treatment at the PTC.

Q. I paid my membership subscriptions for 30 years in the expectation that I would be able to come for free in retirement.

A. You never paid "membership subscriptions" these were classed as donations which are **gifts** to charity; there was never any entitlement to receive any automatic benefit from these gifts.

There has been lots of change in the police service in the last 5-10 years, but to ensure the sustainability of the PTC we could not continue as we were with our current declining income model and we had to seek additional sources of income to help support and sustain the PTC in the medium to long term. The PTC is too important a charity for Serving and Retired Police officers for us to allow it to fail.

Q. What else are you doing to improve PTC finances?

A. This is one of a range of measures that the PTC Board of Trustees has introduced to ensure the financial health and longevity of the PTC which include widening the eligibility for the PTC to other police partners such as PCSOs, Custody/Detention Officers/Special Constables (who will pay the full donation rate) in order to try and increase our donor numbers. By increasing the number of donors it will increase the annual income that the PTC generates which will be reinvested back into providing treatment for Serving and Retired Officers both now and in the future.

Q. If I now have to pay a donation rate, does this give me the same entitlement to apply for treatment at the PTC in the same way as a Serving Officer.

A. Yes Retired Officers will have the same entitlement to apply for treatment at the PTC, however, Serving Officers will continue to have the priority for admission in the same way that all of our Retired Officers did when they were serving, and this is detailed in the PTC Articles of Association. All applications for treatment by Retired Officers will be assessed against our clinical criteria and eligibility criteria in the same way that they always have been. Full details of these policies are on our web site.

Q. Does this mean that I will be able to stay for 2 week treatment blocks at the PTC like Serving Officers?

A. No, stays will be limited as they are now for one week stays for Retired Officers in order to balance numbers and manage waiting lists.

Q. Why were the retired officer associations not consulted on their views?

A. There is a retired officer representation on the Board of Trustees, and furthermore many of the trustees are senior in length of service and close to retirement (indeed one has since retired since the new policy was introduced), and were well aware of the impact of this policy on Retired Officers. The PTC also informally consulted many of the Retired Officers admitted for treatment in recent months about their reaction to the introduction of a donation charge for Retired Officers. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive. It would have been unwieldy and almost impossible to have consulted every Retired Officer branch and association, and indeed the many Retired Officers who are not members of the associations. Officers appointed and voted on to the PTC Board by their Associations and Federations felt that they had enough evidence to know what we needed to do to ensure that the PTC was able to thrive in the future, and rather than avoid the issue and spend months talking about it, they decided to take action now in the best interests of the PTC, and all of our serving and retired donors both now and in the future.

Q. £0.65p per week still seems a lot of money to find.

A. It is appreciated that everyone has different financial demands and pressures, but the PTC believes that £0.65p each week is very good value for money. This equates to £33.80 each year, which is less than half the price of one hour appointment with a private Physio or acupuncturist for example. We could use other analogies such as a month's donations is about the price of one posh coffee a month, one drink in the pub, less than what most of us put in charity collection tins in the high street each week, so we would ask you to keep this very moderate sum of money in perspective. The cost of the PTC of providing one week's treatment to each Retired Officer is £500. If each Retired Officer came to the PTC on only one occasion after donating for 15 years, they would get back in value more than they had donated over this period of time (NB It is believed that this cost of £500 per stay under estimates the true costs of treatment which will be reviewed in 2016).

Q. When will your eligibility policies be updated?

A. All the PTC Eligibility policies will be updated over the next few months online

Q. If I do not want to pay a monthly direct debit can I pay as and when I need treatment.

A. It is believed that a monthly direct debit is the most efficient and effective means of donating to the PTC. If a Retired Officer is not a current donor they should contact the PTC team and seek advice as to whether it is possible to pay a lump sum of £500 for a week's residential treatment instead.

Q. Do I still have to be a current donor if I only want to attend the PTC as a day patient?

A. Yes to access any form of free treatment whether it be as a Residential or Outpatient, each Retired Officer must be a current donor.

Q. At the moment there is a Companion Charge of £150, if I wish to bring a companion with me to the PTC, will that still apply in the future if I am a current donor.

A. Yes it will, there are costs associated with companions who come to the PTC which include food, utility bills, insurance etc., and it would be unreasonable to expect other patients at the PTC to subsidise these costs, therefore they must be levied against the user.

Q. How will I be expected to donate to the PTC?

A. All Retired Officers will have to sign up to donate by direct debit. Direct debit forms are available on the PTC website. Donors will have the option of paying the donation of £0.65p or paying a higher donation sum. We will hope to get this information out through soon to be Retired Officer seminars to capture those about to retire.

Q. If I never donated to the PTC during my service, can I now sign up to donate and access the PTC.

A. Yes you can, although there will be a 12 month qualifying period of you paying your donations before you are able to apply for treatment.

Q. What if I do not want to donate?

A. There is no requirement to donate, however if you do not do so, you will not be eligible for free treatment at the PTC.

CONCLUSION

It is understood that asking retired Officers to donate to the PTC is a change of policy, but change is all around us, and we are aware that the "Police Force" you joined, is not the Police Service in existence now. All of us might wish life to continue as it always has done, but in the case of the PTC, funding through officer donations has reduced by £338,000 compared to 5 years ago, and this financial situation is only likely to be exacerbated over the next 5 years, as police officer numbers are further cut, and PTC donors fall. If we were to do nothing the PTC financial situation will steadily worsen and that may compromise our very existence.

It would have been the easiest thing in the world for the PTC Board of Trustees to have chosen to ignore this issue. It is always easier to do nothing, but in this particular case the PTC Trustees took the more difficult decision of deciding to take on this issue now, and to do something about it with a range of measures including the introduction of a donation charge for Retired Officers. By doing so they are helping to ensure the long term future of the PTC.

Feliciter Servimus