**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2018/19**

**Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**

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| **Title of Report:** | **Attendance Management** |
| **Chief Officer** | **Richard Leicester** |
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| **Report from:** | **Essex Police** |
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1. **Purpose of Report**

This report sets out the attendance data for the financial year April to June 2018 and provides a summary of the current numbers (headcount) of officers, staff and police community support officers (PCSOs) on adjusted, recuperative and restricted duties.

1. **Recommendations**

Not applicable

1. **Executive Summary**

For officers, the average number of days lost for April to June 2018 is 2.17, which is a reduction of 0.30 when compared to April to June 2017 (2.47).

For staff and PCSOs there has been an increase of 0.50 and 1.19 average days lost per person respectively.

Essex Police are projected to end the 2018/19 financial year with officers achieving a reduction in average days lost per person when compared to the last three financial years. Staff are also projected to end the 2018/19 financial year with a reduction in average days lost per person, but PCSO absence in average days lost per person is projected to increase when compared to the last three financial years.

In relation to reasons for absence psychological related absences account for the highest percentage of payroll hours lost for all employee groups. For officers, the percentage of payroll hours lost to psychological related absences has reduced from 40.98% for the period April to June 2017 to 39.26% for April to June 2018. Staff and PCSOs are both showing increases in the percentage of payroll hours lost for psychological related absence for the period April to June 2018, when compared to April to June 2017.

Musculo/skeletal related absence has the second highest percentage of payroll hours lost across all three employee groups and, in contrast to psychological related absence, is showing an increase for officers but reductions for staff and PCSOs for April to June 2018 when compared to the same period last year.

The percentage of payroll hours lost for officers with musculo/skeletal related absence has increased by 3.97% from 22.41% for the period April to June 2017 to 26.38 for April to June 2018. Staff are showing a marginal reduction, but PCSOs are showing a significant reduction in the percentage of payroll hours lost for musculo/skeletal related absence from 30.66% for April to June 2017 to 19.80 for the same period in 2018.

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has increased by 32 for 30th June 2018 when compared to 31st March 2018.

**4.0 Introduction/Background**

This report will focus on the key areas of absence data including overall average days lost per person for each employee group, breakdown of absence by term (short, medium and long), general reasons for sickness and trend analysis.

1. **Current Work and Performance**

Average Days Lost Per Person Quarter 1 of 2018/19 and Quarter 1 of 2017/18

The following table shows average days lost per person for April to June 2018 and April to June 2017 including a variance column for all employee groups.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Employee Group** | **Apr - Jun 17/18** | **Apr - Jun 18/19** | **18/19 Var to 17/18** |
| Officers | 2.47 | 2.17 | -0.30 |
| Staff (exc PCSO) | 1.64 | 2.14 | 0.50 |
| PCSO | 2.93 | 4.12 | 1.19 |

For officers, the average number of days lost for April to June 2018 is 2.17 which is a reduction of 0.30 when compared to April to June 2017 (2.47).

For staff and PCSOs there has been an increase of 0.50 and 1.19 average days lost per person respectively. Reasons for this increase will be highlighted later in the paper.

Projected Average Days Lost Per Person 2018/19

The following table provides the average days lost per person for 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and the projected end of year position for 2018/19.



It should be noted the projection position for 2018/19 is only based on data from one quarter and does not take into account seasonal variations. Therefore the projections are calculated on the basis that the average days lost per person for April to June 2018 remain at that level for each quarter throughout the financial year.

For officers, the average number of days lost per person in 2018/19 is projected to be 8.69 days, which would be a reduction of 2.16 average days when compared to 2017/18 (10.85). If achieved, this would represent the lowest level of absence for officers over the last four financial years.

For Staff, although the current year to date (April to June 2018) is higher than the same period last year, if the absence remains as it currently is, it is projected the average number of days lost per person in 2018/19 will reduce to 8.56, which would be a reduction of 0.69 when compared to 2017/18 (9.25).

For PCSOs, there is a projected increase of 0.95 average days per person in 2018/19 to 16.49 when compared to 2017/18 (15.54). The reason for the increase is predominately due to the low PCSO headcount (111 as at 30th June 2018) and long and medium term absences, which have a much greater impact on the average days lost per person.

As at 30th June 2018, there were 4 PCSOs who were long term absent.

During this review period collaborative working between Operational HR Advisers and line managers has allowed the force to support the return to work of two PCSOs who had been absent since 2017. HR Adviser ‘Days of Action’ continue on a monthly basis to proactively review and advise managers in relation to supportive mechanisms to allow return to work. This focus for the coming months will be on supporting the four long- term absent PCSOs.

Month by Month Comparison of Hours Lost by Employee Group

The following charts show the average hours lost per person for each employee group month on month for 2017/18 and April to June 2018/19





For officers, the chart shows that the average hours lost per person in, April, May and June of 2018 are all lower than any month in 2017/18 at 5.62, 5.78 and 6.01 respectively. In 2017/18 the lowest average hours lost per person was 6.20 in April 2017 and the highest was 9.01 in October 2017.

The staff chart shows that the average hours lost per person in, April, May and June of 2018, at 5.14, 5.57 and 5.09 respectively, are higher than the same period in 2017 but are at their lowest since September 2017. In 2017/18 the lowest average hours lost per person was 3.87 in May 2017 and the highest was 8.16 in January 2018.

For PCSOs, the chart shows that the average hours lost per person in, April, May and June of 2018, at 8.70, 10.47 and 10.35 respectively, are higher than the same period in 2017 but are fairly consistent with the average hours lost per person from July 2017 to March 2018. In 2017/18 the lowest average hours lost per person was 5.49 in April 2017 and the highest was 13.76 in December 2017.

Average Days Lost Per Person by Employee Group and Term (Short/Medium/Long) Quarter 1 of 2018/19 and Quarter 1 of 2017/18

The following tables show the average days lost per person for each employee group by term for April to June 2018 and April to June 2017.



For officers, there has been a reduction in average days lost per person for short term, medium term and long term for April to June 2018 when compared to April to June 2017.

For staff, there has been a reduction in short term absence but an increase in medium term and long term. For PCSOs there has been a marginal increase in short term absence and a more significant increase in medium term and long term absence.

If the trend continues for the remainder of the financial year, the following tables demonstrate the projected end of year position for average days lost per person by term for each employee group.



The average days lost per person, for officers, is projected to reduce across all absence terms.

Staff are projected to increase marginally in long term absence, by 0.32 from 5.03 average days lost per person in 2017/18 to 5.35 in 2018/19. Medium term and short term absence are both currently projected to reduce, by 0.88 average days lost per person for short term and by 0.13 for medium term absence.

The average number of days lost per person for PCSOs is projected to increase in both medium term absence and long term absence; long term absence is projected to increase by 0.46 from 11.68 in 2017/18 to 12.14 in 2018/19 and medium term absence by 1.22 from 1.62 in 2017/18 to 2.84 in 2018/19. This is due to ongoing absence in both medium term and long term absence. Short-term absence is projected to reduce, by 0.73 average days lost to 1.51 for 2018/19 from 2.24 in 2017/18.

Average Days Lost Per Person by Employee Group and Command (Officers/Staff)



Officers

For officers, there are eight commands showing an improvement in average days lost per person for April to June 2018, when compared to the same period in 2017. CT Division and Strategic Change Performance are both showing the largest reduction of 1.88 average days lost per person. CT Division has reduced from 2.77 for April to June 2017 to 0.89 for April to June 2018 and Strategic Change Performance has reduced from 2.09 for April to June 2017 to 0.21 for the same period in 2018.

Three of the biggest commands in terms of headcount (LPA South, LPA West and Kent and Essex Serious Crime) have all reduced in average days lost per person for April to June 2018 compared to April to June 2017, by 1.43, 0.17 and 0.21 respectively. This is important, as reduced absence for the bigger Commands has a much greater effect on the over totals.

There are six commands showing an increase in average days lost per person. Local Policing Support Unit is showing the largest increase of 2.98 average days lost per person from 0.09 for April to June 2017 to 3.07 for April to June 2018. This is due to low headcount in the command (23 as at 30th June 2018) and ongoing long term sickness of an officer for musculo/skeletal absence and an increase in instances; 5 instances started in the period April to June 2018 compared to 1 instance in the period April to June 2017.

Stansted Division has increased from 0.66 average days lost per person for April to June 2017 to 1.78 for April to June 2018. This is also as a result of low headcount in the command (23 as at 30th June 2018) and ongoing long term sickness of an officer for musculo/skeletal absence. The number of instances started between April and June 2017/18 has remained static to the same period last year at 14.

Crime and Public Protection Command, Criminal Justice Command, Local Policing Area (LPA) North, Operational Policing Command (OPC) and Support Services have also seen marginal increases in the average days lost per person for April to June 2018 compared to April to June 2017/18; all increases in these commands are less than 1 average day lost per person.

Staff

Five commands have achieved an improved position in average days lost per person for the period April to June 2018, when compared to the same period in 2017. Local Policing Area (LPA) West is showing the greatest reduction, however the command only had an average headcount of 8 members of staff for April to June 2018, meaning a small amount of absence can significantly impact the overall absence picture. This is a similar position with LPA South, which had the next highest reduction, but only had an average headcount of 7 during this period.

Contact Management (average headcount of 514 staff for April to June 2018) is showing the largest increase of 1.23 average days lost per person from 1.95 days for April to June 2017 to 3.18 days for the same period in 2018. Further analysis shows the majority of sickness absence was due to long term absences, which account for 64.69% of all absence in the command for the period April to June 2018, with absence for psychological reasons being the main cause. For the period April to June 2018, 43.16% of absence related to psychological absence, which is a significant increase compared to the same period last year (17.28%).

Strategic Change Performance has an average headcount of 85 for April to June 2018 and has seen an increase of 1.22 average days lost per person during this period to 2.31 from 1.09 for April to June 2017.

Average Days Lost Per Person by Employee Group and Command (PCSO)



PCSO

Only LPA North is showing a reduction for PCSOs, from 3.18 average days lost per person for April to June 2017 to 3.02 for April to June 2018.

LPA West is showing the greatest increase of average days lost per person (4.60) from 1.99 days for April to June 2017 to 6.59 days for April to June 2018. The main reasons for this are due to long term sickness of 3 PCSOs; 2 for psychological reasons and 1 for musculo/skeletal related absences.

LPA South is showing a marginal increase of 0.23 average days lost per person, from 3.41 for April to June 2017 to 3.64 for April to June 2018.

General Sickness Reason (% of Payroll Hours Lost) April to June, 15/16, 16/17, 17/18







In relation to the percentage of payroll hours lost by general sickness reason, psychological absence is the highest for all employee groups.

For officers, the percentage of payroll hours lost to psychological absence has reduced from 40.98% for April to June 2017 to 39.26% for April to June 2018 and for staff the percentage of payroll hours lost for psychological reasons for April to June 2018 (36.47%) has increased when compared to April to June 2017 (27.04%). For PCSOs, psychological absence has also increased from 47.71% for April to June 2017 to 52.10% for the same period in 2018.

The percentage of payroll hours lost to musculo/skeletal is the second most common reason for absence for all employee groups and has increased for the officers in the period April to June 2018 compared to April to June 2017, but has reduced for staff and PCSOs[[1]](#footnote-1). Officer absence for musculo/skeletal reasons has increased from 22.41% to 26.38%; Staff absence has reduced from 23.33% to 22.88% and PCSOs have seen a significant reduction, in this sickness reason, from 30.66% of payroll hours lost for April to June 2017 to 19.80% for April to June 2018.

Respiratory related absences are showing increases for officers and PCSOs for April to June 2018, when compared to the same period in 2017, but for officers only accounts for 6.48% of payroll hours lost and for PCSOs only 1.67% of absence for the period April to June 2018 was due to respiratory related absence.

Limited Duties or Restricted and Recuperative Duties



The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has increased from 382 as at 31st March 2018 to 414 as at 30th June 2018. The majority of the increase is at Local Policing Area North (13) and Local Policing Area South (13).

When comparing officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties for 31st March 2018 to 30th June 2018, the only ranks showing an increase are the Sergeant rank, which has increased by 4, and the Constable rank, which has increased by 29. All other ranks have either remained static or have reduced.

The number of staff on recuperative or restricted duties has increased marginally by 6 from 77 on 31st March 2018 to 83 on 30th June 2018 and PCSOs have remained the same (9) for both dates.

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**6.0 Implications (Issues)**

Not applicable

**6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

Essex Police have reduced officer average days lost per person in 2017/18 by 0.52 when compared to 2016/17. This trend has continued with April to June 2018 average days lost per officer reducing when compared to April to June 2017.

Reduced sickness absence improves the efficiency and effectiveness of the police force by ensuring more resources are available to task and deploy.

The Police and Crime Plan has an ambition to ensuring the force is sufficiently resourced and this improvement supports that priority.

**6.2 Demand**

Through seeking alternatives to absence more hours are available, as per 6.1 to deal with demand.

**6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

Not applicable

**6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications**

Not applicable

**6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

Not applicable

**7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

The Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) continue to lead with support, guidance and advice to managers and supervisors in respect of police officer attendance and currently have 238 open cases across the team of 4 advisors. The increased focus in support of local Attendance Management Group (AMG) meetings continues and good progress is reported across all commands in both traction and agility of these meetings which it is felt is resulting in earlier interventions and as a result a quicker return to work.

The recent work by the PIU in respect of Professional Development Reviews has further strengthened the PIU’s “support and develop” narrative which is helping supervisors focus on getting the best from their staff which is also believed to be helping them achieve the results they are.

The bi-monthly DCC Absence Scrutiny Board remains a key aspect of the improvement programme as it continues to examine and hold to account the force leadership team’s response to managing absence and well-being.

The national iQuanta data is expected imminently which will assist the force to understand the benchmark of our progress which is expected to lead into a further round of force visits throughout 2018 to seek good practice.

**8.0 Actions for Improvement**

As part of the Attendance Management Group (AMG) meeting over the coming month for each Local Policing Area the HR Advisers will be undertaking a review of medium and long term PCSO cases with Senior Command. They will discuss options for alternatives to absence and equip line managers with the tools and options to support return to work initiatives.

**9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

Operational HR

HR Advisers will continue with the proactive ‘Days of Action’ and this will allow local engagement between the HR professionals and line managers; giving them an opportunity to share updates on cases and for the HR Advisers to coach and support in initiatives to return staff and PCSOs to work at the earliest opportunity. Over the coming months this proactive work will focus on PCSOs. This process has already seen positive outcomes on the last few months with a return to work for PCSOs who had been absent since 2017.

To support the local line management interventions the HR Advisers will also discuss the PCSO absence and initiatives with Senior Commanders in each LPA so they can also support and encourage return to work options.

Performance Improvement Unit

Moving forward, the continuing aspiration of the force is to achieve at least the national average of average days lost per person per year. The national average of officer days lost due to sickness is 9.77, with 10.20 days for staff and 9.50 days for PCSOs. Therefore, based on current performance and activity to address attendance, it is can be seen that we have achieved this aim in respect of officers and now seek to sustain the position throughout the year. The aim to reach the national average for PCSOs has now been reconsidered and it is unclear currently when it can be expected taking into account the absence experienced this year. Police Staff attendance is already better than the national average.

Positive Action

The Feel Well Live Well four session programme promoting personal resilience continues and, to date, 735 delegates have attended the full programme, with a further 134 attending the new Feel Well Live Well Refresher session and 103 people having attended taster sessions. Further taster sessions are scheduled for the summer period in order to encourage awareness and nomination for the full programmes.

The team continue to develop and innovate in relation to the wellbeing initiatives, in line with latest developments and empirical research outcomes, to ensure the most appropriate and cost-effective methods of delivery are achieved. An example being the recent training of welfare staff in ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy), which will be incorporated into the programmes detailed above, as evidence supporting the benefits of ACT interventions in the improvement of employee’s psychological health is now understood. The force are in the process of nominating a volunteer to be involved in the Trauma Resilience in UK Policing pilot of nine forces and will enable the force to gain useful data in relation to workplace trauma exposure, the perception of the support mechanisms provided and a useful comparison against other forces in this area.

Mental Health Awareness week (14-21/05/18) was supported internally with a series of drop-in sessions, taster sessions and awareness sessions on subjects such as TRiM, Feel Well Live Well, Tolerance Window, Menopause and Headway taster sessions in order to engage and support officers and staff.

**10.0 Decisions Required by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

Not applicable

1. Includes sickness reasons such as Post-Operative recovery, Back Pain and Fracture. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)