

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2020

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

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1.0 Purpose of Report

This report provides a narrative to accompany the HR strategic dashboard which relates to the force's attendance, establishment, strength, turnover and diversity profiles.

2.0 Recommendations

Not applicable

3.0 Executive Summary

The officer strength, as at 31st March 2020 was 3293.35 fte, which is 75.35 fte over the establishment of 3218.00. This is a net increase of 96.41 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019.

The police staff strength as at 31st March 2020 was 2060.68 fte, which is 170.71 fte under the establishment of 2231.39 fte. This is an increase of 35.94 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019.

The PCSO strength as at 31st March 2020 was 111.88, which is 2.88 fte over the establishment of 109.00 and is an increase of 3.80 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019.

As at 31st March 2020, there were 521 specials in post, which is a marginal reduction of 1 when compared to the last HR data as at 31st December 2019 but a marginal increase of 4 when compared to the same position last year (517 as at 31st March 2019).

For 2019/20 the total duty hours worked increased to 196,061 from 171,725 in 2018/19 and the average hours per officer increased from 30.57 a month to 31.78.

National figures show that Essex still have the second largest Specials Constabulary in England and Wales and are the joint fastest growing.

Officer, staff and PCSO turnover has reduced for 2019/20, when compared to last year. Officer turnover has reduced from 7.75% to 7.57% and staff turnover has reduced from 9.09% to 8.66%. PCSOs turnover has reduced from 7.34% to 6.75% but specials, however, has increased from 23.28% to 31.57%.

The representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers has increased to a headcount of 107 as at 31st March 2020; an increase of 13 when compared to the last HR data as at 31st December 2019 and an increase of 25 when compared to 31st March 2019. This current level (3.17%) demonstrates the highest proportion of BAME officers in the force over the last 6 years.

As at 2nd April 2020, there were 56 BAME candidates in the officer recruitment process, which equates to 9.51% of all applications. This proportion is higher than proportion of BAME individuals within the economically active population of the county (6.56%).

The proportion of BAME staff and specials has increased when compared to the last HR data pack as at 31st December 2019 and when compared to the 31st March 2019, where PCSOs have remained static from a headcount perspective.

The headcount of female officers has increased from 1106 (33.73%) as at 31st December 2019 to 1150 (34.07%) as at 31st March 2020. When compared to 31st March 2019 (1037 / 32.88%) this has increased by 113 and 1.20 percentage points.

For staff the proportion of females has increased slightly from 64.96% as at 31st December 2019 to 65.01% as at 31st March 2020, whilst PCSOs and specials have reduced slightly. When compared to 31st March 2019, the proportion of female staff has increased for staff, PCSOs and specials.

Absence

For Officers, in the 2019/20 financial year, the average days lost per person was 9.21, which is a reduction of 0.20 average days lost per person when compared to 2018/19 (9.41). This is the lowest level of absence over the last 5 years.

For staff, the average days lost per person has increased to 10.47 for 2019/20 when compared to last year (9.45).

For PCSOs, in 2019/20, the average days lost per person was 11.13, which is a reduction of 1.00 average days lost per person when compared to last year (12.13). This is also the lowest level of absence over the last 3 years.

For officers, the average days lost per person for short term absences has increased marginally when compared to last year (from 2.20 to 2.27), but there has been a reduction in medium term and long term absence, reducing from 1.20 to 1.10 and 6.01 to 5.85 respectively. For staff, there have been increases in all absence terms for 2019/20, when compared to 2018/19. For PCSOs, there has been an increase in short and medium term absence but a reduction in long term absence.

Psychological absence accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost for officers and staff and is the second most common reason for absence for PCSOs, albeit, the percentage of payroll hours lost, for PCSOs, has seen a significant reduction from 29.02% to 19.72%. For PCSOs, musculo/skeletal absence accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost and this reason is also the second most common reason for sickness absence for officers and staff.

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has increased marginally from 396 as at 31st December 2019 to 404 as at 31st March 2020.

4.0 Introduction/Background

This commentary report provides context for the information contained within the HR strategic dashboard sheet and summarises the key highlights from each section. The data has been taken from the force HR system (SAP) as at 31st March 2020, except where alternative data is displayed for trend analysis.

High level comparisons relating to recruitment, turnover, absence and force level strength fte figures have been provided against both the last HR data pack as at 31st December 2019 and the same period last year (31st March 2019). This allows for recent trends to be detailed along with data for the full 2019/20 financial year.

5.0 Current Work and Performance

Please note the following section numbers detailed in the below subheadings relate to the corresponding reference on the HR strategic dashboard.

1. Establishment v Strength as at 31st March 2020

The officer strength, as at 31st March 2020 was 3293.35 fte, which is 75.35 fte over the establishment of 3218.00. This is a net increase of 96.41 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019 and a net increase of 229.41 fte when compared to the same period last year (3063.94 fte as at 31st March 2019).

The police staff strength as at 31st March 2020 was 2060.68 fte, which is 170.72 fte under the establishment of 2231.39. This is a net increase of 35.94 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019 meaning the force vacancy rate has reduced from 9.16% to 7.65%. When compared to the same period last year the strength has increased by 56.52 fte.

The PCSO strength as at 31st March 2020 was 111.88 fte, which is 2.88 fte over the establishment of 109.00. This is a net increase of 3.80 fte since the last HR report as at 31st December 2019.

The reason the PCSO strength fte is marginally over the establishment is due to the recent intake of PCSOs that started on 17th February 2020. As the PCSO establishment and turnover is so low, it is not financially viable to recruit and train a few PCSOs at a time, therefore, it has been agreed with Corporate Finance that the PCSO strength fte can exceed the budgeted establishment by up to 5.00 fte where required.

Commands with the highest vacancies

Please note, the figures on the dashboard relate to the top three Commands with the highest vacancy percentage (%) levels as a proportion against total establishment, for Commands with a headcount of over 50.

Officers

Excluding the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU), the Command with the highest vacancy rate is Crime & Public Protection Command (12.02%), followed by the Serious Crime Directorate (11.18%) and the Operational Policing Command (10.91%).

In relation to the Crime & Public Protection Command, whilst the vacancy rate has increased to 12.02% from 6.24% as at 31st December 2019, the strength has actually increased marginally from 268.15 fte to 269.22 fte. The reason the vacancy rate has increased is the implementation of 20.00 fte growth posts that went live in January 2020. Of those posts, all except one has been filled with officers either currently in post or awaiting a start date.

Whilst the Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) has the one of the highest vacancy rates (11.18%), the strength fte has increased by 8.57 fte from 184.61 fte as at 31st December 2019 to 193.19 fte as at 31st March 2020. It should be noted that, as with Crime & Public Protection Command the establishment in SCD has increased from 210.51 fte to 217.51 fte, which was due to the movement of the Forensic Collision Investigation Police Constables (PCs) from Road's Policing Department to SCD.

In relation to the Operational Policing Command, the vacancy rate has increased, which is due to both an increase in establishment of 13.00 (from 450.00 to 463.00) and a decrease in strength of 7.33 fte (from 419.82 fte to 412.49 fte). Most vacancies (22.00 fte) are in the role of Roads Policing Police PC of which all have been selected for. Some individuals were due to start on the 30th March 2020,

however, as part of the COVID-19 response, they will now remain in their existing posts. This will be kept under review and new start dates agreed when appropriate.

There are also 17.21 fte vacancies in Firearms PC and Airport Armed Response PC roles. The next firearms course was scheduled for 27th April 2020; however, this has recently been postponed to June 2020. In addition, at the time of writing, there are 3 individuals due to transfer into force who are at the pre-employment checks phase of the recruitment process and a further individual who has cleared pre-employment checks but is unable to join until the next firearms course commences.

Staff

As per the last HR report, Strategic Change Performance Directorate and SCD remain the Commands with the highest vacancy levels. However, Strategic Change Performance Directorate have a marginally reduced vacancy factor from 14.73% to 14.46% (10.95 fte vacancies).

In contrast, SCD have increased marginally from 14.38% to 14.85%. It should be noted that, due to the collaborative nature of SCD, a number of posts are joint funded and show as a vacancy, however they are filled by Kent employees. For example, there are 10.00 fte Digital Forensic Analyst vacancies, which show as vacancies in Essex, but they are, in fact, all occupied by Kent members of staff. In relation to 100% Essex funded positions, the role with the highest number of vacancies is the Criminal Intelligence Analysts (5.21 fte). Of these, 3 posts are held for individuals currently working on Operation Sceptre and the remaining vacancies have been filled with candidates either in pre-employment checks or awaiting start dates.

The Operational Policing Command has the third highest vacancy rate with 13.28%, which has increased from 9.49% as at 31st December 2019. The majority of vacancies are in the roles of Casualty Reduction Assistants (8.77 fte) and Duties Administrators (3.71 fte); both of which will be progressing to advert over the coming weeks.

For information, the Crime and Public Protection Command had the third highest vacancy percentage as at 31st December 2019 (13.17%), however this has reduced to 11.11% resulting in it no longer being in the top 3.

The total number of vacancies of 170.71 fte, when measured as strength fte against establishment, means the force currently has a vacancy rate of 7.65%, which is a reduction compared to the last HR report (9.16%). However, it should be noted that this is higher than the force wider average vacancy factor requirement of 5.50%. Note, this accounts for staff in posts that are not permanently on the establishment (non-established posts).

Whilst the current vacancy rate is higher than the force vacancy factor requirement the strength fte of police staff is increasing; the monthly average number of joiners for 2019/20 (21.23 fte) is higher than the monthly average number of leavers for 2019/20 (14.85 fte).

A significant proportion of police staff vacancies are actively being recruited to and will be at differing stages of the recruitment process (for example advert, selection and pre-employment). However, it should be noted that some roles are classed as on hold for reasons such as being held for substantive post holders who have secured temporary promotions or secondments, roles that have not been requested to go to advert as they are pending a review and roles that are on hold to fund another post. There are also a number of roles that hold vacancies as they are not fully occupied (due to the occupant being part time).

At the time of writing, there were 48 external candidates in pre-employment checks for a range of roles across the force.

2. Specials Data: Headline Figures

As at 31st March 2020, there were 521 specials in post, which is a marginal reduction of 1 when compared to the last HR data as at 31st December 2019 and a marginal increase of 4 when compared to the same position last year (517 as at 31st March 2019).

National figures show that Essex still have the second largest Specials constabulary in England and Wales and are the joint fastest growing, based on January 2020 data. The next national data set will be published around July 2020.

Specials Attrition

The average monthly leavers for 2019/20 is 13.67, which is an increase when compared to 2018/19 (9.17). When represented as a turnover percentage, this has increased from 23.28% for 2018/19 to 31.57% for 2019/20 (a percentage point increase of 8.29).

The main reason for the turnover increase is predominately due to a significant increase in the number of specials leaving to join the regulars. In 2019/20, a total of 75 specials (45.73%) left to join the regulars, compared to just 33 (30.00%) in 2018/19. It should be noted that, whilst not as significant as those joining the regulars, the number of resignations increased from 71 to 82 for the same periods.

Specials Duty Hours

For 2019/20, the total duty hours worked increased to 196,061 from 171,725 in 2018/19 and the average hours per officer increase to 31.78 from 30.57 for the same periods.

The total duty hours worked in 2019/20 of 196,061 is an average of 16,338 a month. This is the equivalent of, on average, 1021 specials working 16 hours a month (an increase when compared to 2018/19 where this figure stood at 894).

Specials Command continue to produce a quarterly report to the balanced scorecard process, giving details of how the Special Constabulary contributes to 'Plan on a Page' priorities.

3. Recruitment 2019/20

Officers

2019/20 Final Recruitment Numbers

Since the last update, there has been an intake of 79.00 fte on the 10th February 2020 and an intake on the 30th March 2020 of 56.00 fte officers. Therefore, in the full 2019/20 financial year, a total of 463.74 fte joined the force through a number of entry routes, as detailed below:

- **408.00** fte new recruits
- **19.00** fte via the bespoke internal Detective Investigate First programme
- **22.93** fte transfers in from other forces
- **3.81** fte re-joiners
- **10.00** fte via the Police Now Programme

The total recruitment of 463.74 fte in 2019/20 represents the highest level of recruitment over the last 10 years. As a result, the force ended the financial year 76.35 fte over establishment, which ensures the force is in a strong position to achieve the increased establishment level for the 31st March 2021 following the Home Office uplift announcement.

2020/21 Recruitment Plan

There is a recruitment plan in place for the 2020/21 financial year that currently aims to recruit up to 352.00 fte officers. If achieved, this will result in the force ending the 2020/11 financial year with a strength of 3369.35 (0.35 over the uplifted established of 3369.00). Note, if required there is flexibility in the recruitment plan to train up to 410.00 fte if required.

Successful achievement of these recruitment ambitions will be dependent on a number of factors, most notably the pipeline of candidates into the recruitment process and their success through the assessment and clearance process.

For the week commencing 30th March 2020, Essex received 68 applications, which is an increase of 2 when compared to the previous week and a significant increase when compared to the same period in 2019, where only 30 applications were received. Application numbers for January 2020 to March 2020 increased to an average of 58 per week, which is 13 more per week than October 2019 to December 2019.

To ensure continued oversight, projected recruitment numbers are reviewed regularly by HR Resourcing, the Strategic Change Team and the Corporate Finance Department. The plan includes contingencies and can be adjusted to account for changes in establishment, as directed by the Strategic Change Team, and changes in attrition.

Specials

2019/20 Final Recruitment Numbers

Since the last HR update a total of 36 specials have joined. Therefore, the total number of specials joining in 2019/20 was 170, which is a reduction when compared to 2018/19, where 215 joined, but similar to levels seen in 2017/18 (180). As a result, this means that over this three year period a total of 565 specials have joined the force, which is more than the combined total of special joiners over the 6 year period between 2011/12 and 2016/17 (486 joiners).

The marginal reduction is primarily due the specials media campaign being run alongside the regular officer recruitment, as well as the force receiving a lower number of applications each week through some periods of the year. For example, between October 2019 and December 2019, there were 211 applications, which was a reduction of 26% when compared to the same period in 2018.

It should be noted, however, that application numbers increased to an average of 21 per week for the period January 2020 to March 2020, which, with the exception of January 2019 to March 2019, is the highest level of average weekly applications seen in a quarter over the last 8 quarters.

2020/21 Recruitment Plan

Prior to the current situation regarding COVID-19 there were a total of 16 courses scheduled to run in 2020/21, which would attract, at full capacity, a total of 226 specials. The first course in 2020/21 has been postponed and it is anticipated further courses over the next 3 months (April 2020 to June 2020) could also be cancelled.

It should be noted however, that, if required, and subject to trainer and classroom availability, the current classes could increase from the current levels of 11 and 16 to a maximum of 22 candidates a class, which would provide the flexibility required to offset postponements and potential cancellations of earlier courses in 2020/21.

A weekly meeting is chaired by the Head of Special Constabulary, with appropriate stakeholders, which is supported by the Recruitment oversight meeting that is chaired by the Head of Business Services and the Head of Resourcing.

This position will continue to be monitored through the Specials Review Board, chaired at Chief Officer level, to ensure effective oversight of the ambition.

4. Turnover

The number of officer leavers for the 2019/20 financial year has increased to an average of 21 a month when compared to the average of 20 in 2018/19, however this is in line with the leaver profile that was projected for 2019/20.

Importantly however, when measured as a turnover percentage (the proportion of leavers against average headcount) there has been a reduction. For the 2019/20

financial year, the turnover was 7.57%, which is 0.18 percentage points lower than 2018/19 (7.75%).

For staff, the average monthly leavers for the 2019/20 financial year was 16, which is lower than last year (17). From a turnover perspective this has reduced from 9.09% to 8.66%, a reduction of 0.43 percentage points.

For PCSOs, there have been 8 leavers for 2019/20, which is a turnover percentage of 6.75%. This is a turnover percentage point reduction of 0.59 when compared to the last year, but the headcount has remained the same. Of the 8 PCSOs that left, 1 retired, 4 resigned and 3 left to join the regulars.

The turnover for specials has increased from 23.28% for 2018/19 to 31.57% for 2019/20 for reasons as stated above.

5. Gender & BAME Representation as at 31st March 2020

The representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers has increased to a headcount of 107 as at 31st March 2020, an increase of 13 when compared to the last HR data as at 31st December 2019 and an increase of 25 when compared to 31st March 2019. This is a percentage point increase of 0.18% from 2.99% as at 31st December 2019 to 3.17% as at 31st March 2020 and of 0.57% when compared to 31st March 2019 (2.60%); it also demonstrates the highest proportion of BAME officers in the force over the last 6 years. The percentage representation of officers within the force is 3.39% under the proportion of BAME individuals within the economically active population (6.56%¹).

Of the 437 new recruits this financial year (2019/20), a total of 29 are BAME, which equates to 6.64% of all recruits, this is an increase when compared to new recruits in 2018/19 (14 / 4.47%). Of the 28 transferees / re-joiners, 2 were BAME, which equates to 7.14% of all transferees/re-joiners; in 2018/19, 3 transfers in / re-joiners were BAME, which is 1 higher than this year.

Combined, of the 465 joiners 31 were BAME, which equates to 6.67% of all new joiners, this is an increase when compared to all joiners in 2018/19 (17 / 4.91%). The total of 31 BAME joiners for this financial year is higher than the previous 9 financial years.

There are currently 56 BAME candidates in the officer recruitment process, which equates to 9.51% of all applications (as at 2nd April 2020). It should be noted that these individuals are still required to pass the stages of the selection process and, as such, it is not guaranteed they will subsequently join the force. Of the 56 BAME candidates in process, 11 have passed the selection process and are currently going through pre-employment checks, with 9 hoping to be cleared in time for the June 2020 intake and 2 for later intakes.

¹ 2011 National Census Data

For staff, the BAME headcount has increased from 82 as at 31st December 2019 (3.67%) to 85 as at 31st March 2020 (3.74%), this is also an increase when compared to the position as at 31st March 2019 (80 / 3.62%).

For PCSOs, the headcount has remained static at 3, however, due to the overall PCSO headcount being higher, the actual proportion of PCSOs has reduced from 2.59% to 2.50%; this is a slightly higher proportion than that as at 31st March 2019 (2.56%).

The number of BAME specials has increased from 34 (6.51%) as at 31st December 2019 to 36 as at 31st March 2020; this is the same BAME headcount as at 31st March 2019.

The headcount of female officers has increased from 1106 (33.73%) as at 31st December 2019 to 1150 as at 31st March 2020 (34.08%). When compared to 31st March 2019 (1037 / 32.88%) this has increased by 113 and 1.20 percentage points.

Of the 437 new recruits this financial year, a total of 156 are female, which equates to 35.70%. Of the 28 transferees / re-joiners, 12 were female, which equates 42.86%.

Combined, of the 465 joiners, 168 were female, which equates to 36.13% and is higher than the current female officer proportion (34.07%). This has increased when compared to 2018/19 when, of the 346 combined joiners, 128 were female.

For staff the proportion of females has increased slightly from 64.96% as at 31st December 2019 to 65.01% as at 31st March 2020, whilst PCSOs and specials have reduced slightly. PCSOs have reduced from 56.03% as at 31st December 2019 to 55.00% as at 31st March 2020 and specials, for the same period, have reduced from 32.38% to 32.05%. When compared to 31st March 2019, the proportion of female staff has increased for staff, PCSOs and specials.

6. Absence and Adjusted / Recuperative

Summary Numbers

For officers, in the full 2019/20 financial year, the average days lost per person was 9.21, which is a reduction of 0.20 average days lost per person when compared to the 2018/19 financial year (9.41). This is also the lowest level of absence over the last 5 financial years.

For staff, the average days lost per person has increased to 10.47 for the 2019/20 financial year, when compared to 2018/19 (9.45).

For PCSOs, in the full 2019/20 financial year, the average days lost per person was 11.13, which is a reduction of 1.00 average days lost per person when compared to 2018/19 (12.13). This is also the lowest level of absence over the last 3 years.

Average hours lost by month 2018/19 & 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020)

For officers, the graph on the strategic dashboard shows that the year started with 2 months of increased absence followed by 5 months of reduced absence when compared to the same months in 2018. Whilst the months of November 2019, December 2019 and January 2020 were all higher than the same months in the previous year, absence this has started to reduce again with 2 consecutive months of reduced absence in February 2020 and March 2020.

In addition, the average hours lost in those 5 months are the lowest levels of absence seen in those months over the last 5 years (i.e. Jul 2019 is lower than July 2018, July 2017, July 2016 and July 2015).

For staff, sickness absence is higher in all months, except one, for the 2019/20 financial year when compared to the 2018/19 financial year. February 2020 was the only month where absence was lower than the same period last year; 6.59 average hours lost per person compared to 6.67 in February 2019 (a reduction of 0.08).

For PCSOs, as with officers, absence in 6 months of the 2019/20 financial year have been lower when compared to the same months last year. The months of April 2019 and September 2019 through to January 2020 were all higher than the same months in the last financial year.

Commands with highest absence (average days lost per person)

Please note the figures on the dashboard relate to average days lost per person and those listed in the top 3 are Commands with headcounts over 50.

Officers

For officers, the Commands with the highest average days lost per person are Contact Management (23.23), ERSOU (12.76) and Criminal Justice Command (9.45), which is the same top 3 as reported last quarter.

For Contact Management, although they have the highest average days lost per person, their absence is lower for the 2019/20 financial year (23.23) when compared to 2018/19 (24.74). This represents a reduction of 1.51 average days lost per person.

The reasons for absence accounting for the highest percentage of payroll hours lost in Contact Management are psychological (48.52%) and musculo/skeletal (18.92%). This is the same top two reasons for absence in ERSOU (psychological – 52.62%, musculo/skeletal – 18.52%) and Criminal Justice Command (psychological – 31.33%, musculo/skeletal – 26.49%).

LPA North are not in the top 3 Commands with highest absence, but they are the biggest Command in force and have the highest level of absence across the three Local Policing Areas' (LPA) with 10.68 average days lost per person, when compared to the South (8.04) and the West (8.33). However, it should be noted that LPA North have reduced their average days lost per person by 1.93, when compared to 2018/19 (12.61).

Although there are other Commands with high average days lost per person; Operation Sceptre with 13.83 average days lost per person, Strategic Change Performance with 9.58 Local Policing Support Unit with 8.46, these have smaller average officer headcounts within the Commands and, therefore, any absence experienced has a greater impact on their overall rates.

There have been reductions across most commands for the 2019/20 financial year, when compared to 2018/19, with the greatest reductions being in Support Services (12.73 to 4.13) and Strategic Change Performance (12.74 to 9.58).

Staff

For staff, the Commands with the highest average days lost per person, for the 2019/20 financial year, are Contact Management (14.10), Crime and Public Protection (12.20) and Criminal Justice Command (11.96).

Contact Management staff absence has increased by 0.92 average days lost per person for 2019/20 compared to 2018/19. In relation to absence reasons, psychological related absences account for the highest proportion of absence (27.22%), however this is lower than the proportion lost last year (35.27%).

Musculo/skeletal related absences account for the next highest proportion of payroll hours lost (15.60%), which is an increase when compared to the same period last year (12.49%). There has also been an increase in the proportion of digestive, genito urinary, nervous system and miscellaneous related absences. Cardiac and circulatory related absence is showing the greatest reduction in the proportion of payroll hours lost; from 6.06% to 2.06%.

Crime & Public Protection Command have one of the highest average days lost per person of the larger commands (12.20) and this is an increase when compared to last year (9.74). In relation to reasons for absence, the types of absences and instances are similar this year when compared to last but, like Contact Management, psychological related absences account for the highest proportion (35.54%). This is an increase when compared to the same period last year (21.74%) and musculo/skeletal is second with 25.38%, which is also an increase, from 23.53%.

Criminal Justice Command's average days lost per person is 11.96, which is an increase when compared to last year (11.02). As with Contact Management and Crime & Public Protections, psychological absence accounts for the highest proportion of absence (28.57%), but miscellaneous related absences are the second highest proportion at 22.03%; this is a 9.04 percentage point increase when compared to last year (12.99%).

Whilst not in the top 3, Support Services are the second largest Command in terms of headcount and their average days lost per person has increased from 6.34, for the 2018/19 financial year, to 8.25 for 2019/20. This is predominantly due an increase in average days lost per person in Business Services, Corporate Finance, Estate Services, IT, Learning & Development, Procurement and Transport Services. In relation to reasons, psychological related absences account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost in Procurement, Learning & Development and Business Services. In Corporate Finance and Transport Services miscellaneous related absence accounts for the greatest proportion of absence, in Estates Services

Nervous system absence is highest and in IT musculo skeletal absence is the reason for the highest proportion of absence.

As with officers, there are other Commands with high average days lost per person for staff, including Specials Command Team at 21.71, LPA South at 15.97 and Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU) at 14.32, but these have significantly lower average headcounts meaning absence can have a much greater impact on the Commands figures and appear disproportionate to Commands with higher headcounts.

For staff, there are two commands with a headcount of over 25 that have reduced; Strategic Change Performance (from 10.06 to 9.33) and LPSU (from 14.37 to 14.32).

PCSOs

For PCSOs, only LPA North is showing an increase in average days lost per person, to 10.48 for 2019/20 when compared to 6.99 for 2018/19.

LPA South has seen a reduction of 4.39 average days lost per person from 13.97 2018/19 to 9.58 for 2019/20 and LPA West has seen the most significant reduction of 5.98 average days lost per person for the same periods (from 19.97 for 2018/19 to 113.99 for 2019/20). However, it should be noted that the overall PCSO headcount is low, so a small number of instances can have a much greater impact on absence.

Absence Term

For officers, the average days lost per person for short term absence has increased marginally when compared to last year, from 2.20 average days lost per person in 2018/19 to 2.27 in 2019/20. For medium term absence there has been a slight reduction from 1.20 for 2018/19 to 1.10 for 2019/20 and long term absence has also reduced, reducing from 6.01 to 5.85.

For staff, there have been increases in all absence terms for 2019/20, when compared to 2018/19. Long term absence has shown the greatest increase, from 5.17 average days lost per person to 6.06; medium term has increased only slightly, from 1.62 to 1.67 and short term has increased from 2.66 to 2.74.

For PCSOs there has been an increase in short and medium term absence, but a reduction in long term absence; 8.49 average days lost per person, reducing to 7.16.

Absence Reasons

In relation to the percentage of payroll hours lost by general sickness reason, psychological absence is the highest for officers and staff and the second highest for PCSOs.

For officers, the percentage of payroll hours lost to psychological absence has increased from 37.93% for 2018/19 to 38.58% for 2019/20. However, when measured as the average number of days lost per person this has reduced from 3.57 to 3.55.

For staff, psychological related absences accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (31.54%). However, whilst the proportion of payroll hours has remained static when compared to the same period last year, the average days lost per person has increased significantly from 2.93 in 2018/19 to 3.30 in 2019/20.

The percentage of payroll hours lost to musculo/skeletal is the second most common reason for absence for officers and staff but has reduced for both employee groups for 2019/20 when compared to 2018/19. Officer absence for musculo/skeletal reasons has reduced from 21.95% to 19.43% and staff has reduced from 18.70% to 15.14% for the same periods.

For PCSOs, musculo/skeletal absence accounts for the highest percentage of payroll hours lost but has reduced from 33.63% for 2018/19 to 31.48% for 2019/20. Psychological related absences accounts for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost but has reduced significantly from 29.02% to 19.72% for the same periods.

In relation to other absence reasons for officers, the majority have remained largely similar this period when compared to last. The most noticeable increases have been in respiratory related absence (from 9.77% to 11.09%) and headache/migraine (from 2.14% to 3.16%). Apart from musculo skeletal related absence, the absence reason with the highest reduction in percentage of payroll hours lost is miscellaneous reasons (reducing from 6.05% to 5.18%).

For staff, the percentage of payroll hours lost for other absence reasons have also remained fairly static this financial year when compared to last. However, absence for miscellaneous reasons has seen the greatest increase in the proportion of payroll hours lost (increasing from 8.97% to 12.73%). This is also represented when comparing the average days lost per person, which has increased from 0.85 in 2018/19 to 1.33 in 2019/20 – an increase of 0.49 average days lost per person. This is predominately due to an increase in the average days lost per person for the sickness reasons of cancer, post operation recovery and conditions affecting multiple parts.

For PCSOs, there have been a number of variations, however, due to such a low headcount, this is expected. For example, cardiac/circulatory, ear/eye related absences have reduced but there has been an increase in the percentage of payroll hours lost to reasons such as digestive, genito urinary, headache/migraine, infectious disease and respiratory.

Performance Improvement Unit (PIU)

Three command areas are now subject of an ongoing action plan for PIU. This is based on them being identified as outliers for both officer and staff absence, each with higher headcounts and higher average days lost per person:

1. Contact Management
2. North LPA Investigations
3. North LPT (Clacton)

The PIU have focussed on and supported each of these priority areas. As previously reported, peer review and more in depth support has been provided to these two commands. The new Head of PIU will be reviewing absence across the commands to ensure that efforts are maintained where there have been long term high absence rates, but also those that might appear to have emerging trends which could be addressed with earlier interventions.

Operational HR

The Operational HR team have continued to review and focus on the top 5 departments assessing case management, compliance with the protocol and to assess additional methods of support and return to work initiatives. This analysis over an initial 3-month period has shown peaks and troughs in attendance levels for those top 5 departments; however no real pattern or reason to the absence levels have been identified based on the data.

Contact Management absence continues to be the focus from an HR perspective; Contact Management Command continue to implement the attendance improvement plan, undertake additional AMGs to review compliance and deep dive reviews for ongoing long term and high Bradford Score cases.

Other detailed activity for the Operational HR team includes providing professional advice and guidance to supervisors from Operational HR on bespoke cases, operational HR to continue encouraging and supporting the utilisation of Case Conferences with managers and Occupational Health and the delivery of the final Reasonable Adjustment training sessions to Commands and Departments. Contact Management interventions are tracked and reviewed through a weekly ACC meeting. Likewise, this and all other police staff absence, is tracked through a fortnightly oversight meeting with the Director of HR and a dashboard to monitor the top 5 departments has been created and available for daily review with tracker to show previous day, 30, 60 and 90 day comparator data.

Adjusted / Recuperative

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has increased slightly from 396 as at 31st December 2019 to 404 as at 31st March 2020.

The number of staff on recuperative or restricted duties has reduced by 3 from 103 to 100 and PCSOs have also reduced by 3 from 11 to 8 for the same periods.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

Not applicable

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

Essex police have continued to recruit officers, in line with the recruitment plan for 2019/20, with the recruitment resulting in the end of year strength fte exceeding the establishment by 75.35 fte.

The representation of BAME officers has increased significantly in 2019/20 resulting in the 31st March 2020 position of 107 (headcount) / 3.17% (proportion of total officer workforce) representing the highest proportion of BAME officers in force over the last 6 years.

The Special Constabulary headcount has increased marginally but remains at its highest level since April 2014.

The Special Constabulary provided 196,061 hours of policing in 2019/20 compared to 171,725 in 2018/19.

The total duty hours worked in 2019/20 of 196,061 is an average of 16,638 a month. is the equivalent of, on average, 1021 specials working 16 hours a month (an increase when compared to the same period last year – 894).

Ensuring the force is sufficiently resourced is a specific ambition within the narrative of the Police and Crime Plan. The provision of a sufficient number of skilled, equipped and supported resources closely links to the delivery of all seven of the priorities. In addition to this, having a workforce that is representative of our communities will give the force a broader range of skills, knowledge and experience that can positively contribute towards the priorities.

6.2 Demand

An increase in overall resources has resulted in more hours available to deal with demand.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

The current situation regarding COVID-19 creates a significant risk for the recruitment of all roles, however intakes remain a focus to enable resources to joiner as far as possible. The following outlines some of the steps that are being taken to mitigate this risk:

- The police constable recruitment process continues to be progressed during the COVID 19 situation with applications continuing to be shortlisted, eligibility checks being completed and briefings being conducted virtually.
- The Assessment Centre SEARCH is currently postponed however a national virtual solution is being explored with a proposed delivery date of April for this to be shared.
- Senior Interviews are continuing on a virtual platform.
- Clearances are currently continuing to be progressed with virtual elements for fitness and medical in the final stages of sign off implementing national guidance.
- All other processes where an interview is the selection method are being progressed virtually.
- Any process with an assessment centre approach is having virtual options explored.

- Ad-hoc roles within the Force continue to be supported by the recruitment team hosting the virtual interviews to enable recruiting managers to continue to recruit to their vacancies.
- Force web pages are utilised to keep candidates updated on each of the relevant processes.
- The Forces Recruiting Managers Toolkit has also been updated with advice/guidance/tips to support continued recruitment during this time.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

Not applicable

6.5 Health and Safety Implications

Not applicable

7.0 Consultation/Engagement

Operational HR - Human Resource Advisors / Partners
Amanda Humphrey - Head of Health and Wellbeing
Paul Kinzett – Head of PIU

8.0 Actions for Improvement

As stated on page 14 with regards to the work being carried out by Operational HR to reduce, where possible, the average days lost per person to sickness absence in the 2020/21 financial year.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

1. Continue to increase the number of specials throughout 2020/21 in line with the aspiration to achieve 600 by March 2020.

Expected Outcome:

2. Continue to increase BAME officer representation throughout 2020/21.

Expected Outcome: following the increase seen in 2019/20 and the number of BAME officers currently within the recruitment process, it is projected that the number and percentage of BAME officers will continue to improve throughout the 2020/21.

Absence

Operational HR

The Essex Attendance Improvement Plan continues to be implemented with four out of the seven actions completed and embedded as business as usual. This is monitored

and reviewed through the Director of HR's Absence Oversight Meeting. The Operational HR team are now reviewing training tools and intranet guidance to continue to support supervisors and line managers in the management of absence.

Health and Wellbeing Services

The Feel Well Live Well sessions continue with 1499 individuals engaging in either the full programme, refresher or taster sessions thus promoting organisational health and wellbeing. The Feel Well Live Well for Leaders programme has also increased to 127 delegates having now attended this programme, which demonstrates traction in the Leaders programme continues.

The Employee Assistance programme (EAP) as detailed in the last report is now available for staff and officers, with the provision extended to include Special Constabulary members and has been in place since early February 2020.

The internal provision will continue to provide both face to face counselling and the delivery of the pro-active initiatives cited above, therefore this is in addition to the wide range of support provided by Essex Police and this enhanced service also provides:

- Unlimited access to 24/7/365 confidential telephone helpline
- Coverage for spouse/partner and dependants within HMRC guidelines
- Legal information services & Debt & Financial information
- Family advice line on topics such as childcare and eldercare
- Manager consultancy and support
- Two visits for on-site promotion

The first location of the year-long Health Kiosk programme was installed in the FCR at the beginning of February and has now moved to its second location of Essex Police College.

The year-long programme of venues across the county will allow the organisation to have an in-depth understanding of employee's health and moreover to allow individuals to feel informed and empowered regarding their own health by the use of the digital platform within the workplace. The kiosk allows the individual access to personal health screening including BMI, height, weight, blood pressure and heart rate etc. and is personal to them and provides extensive signposting dependant on personal results.

Anonymised management information will be available regarding usage and issues affecting individuals on a location basis can be obtained from the EAP service, health data from the kiosks and this coupled with the management data from the psychological screening process, provides the force with the information required to inform and direct future initiatives from an evidence based perspective to further support organisational health and wellbeing.