

**Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)**  
**Annual Report 2019/20**

This report sets out the steps taken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex during 2019/20 in pursuit of their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age (including children and young people);
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership (although only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination);
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality);
- Religion or belief
- Sex, and
- Sexual orientation

Scrutiny and Transparency

Throughout 2019/20, the PFCC has continued to exercise oversight of the force's progress in delivering the seven priorities of the Police and Crime Plan, including the commitments to break the cycle of domestic violence; to tackle gangs and organised crime, and to protect children and vulnerable people from harm.

Following national findings that Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) are under-utilised, such that a large proportion of victims who may benefit from them are not receiving them, the PFCC's Performance and Resources Board considered a report by the Policing Institute for the Eastern Region (PIER) on the use of these tools by Essex Police, and there has since been a significant increase in the successful application of DVPNs and DVPOs by the force.

The PFCC's Performance and Resources Board has also continued to receive quarterly HR reports detailing the force's attendance and sickness levels and the reasons for this; its

establishment compared with strength; turnover (including an analysis of the reasons why people leave the force), and Essex Police's diversity profile. This details the proportion of officers and staff who are from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background as well as the number and proportion of BAME candidates in the recruitment process compared with the proportion of BAME individuals within the economically active population. The report also monitors the proportion of BAME PCSOs and Special Constables, along with the headcount and proportion of female officers within the regulars, PCSOs and Special Constabulary, as well as levels of engagement with the force's health and wellbeing services, leadership programmes and (with effect from February 2020) the new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). During 2019/20, the force has also reported to the PFCC on the positive action being taken to increase the representation of the LGBTQ community within the Special Constabulary.

The PFCC's Performance and Resources Board has also received quarterly reports on the work of the Crime and Public Protection Command to protect vulnerable groups. This sets out the work of, and identified areas for improvement within, the Public Protection Investigation Units (PPIUs), Adult Sexual Abuse Investigation Teams (ASAITs), Child Abuse Investigation Teams (CAITs), the Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) team; the Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT), and the Domestic Abuse Investigation Teams (DAITs). The Board has also continued to scrutinise the use of force and Stop and Search powers by Essex Police on a quarterly basis. The report received compares the deployment of these tactics relative to 2011 Census data; the recorded reasons for the use of such tactics, and the proportion of stops and searches that did not have reasonable grounds. As a result of this scrutiny, Essex has seen a notable reduction in the latter.

Linked to this, the PFCC's Performance and Resources Board has continued to receive quarterly digests of the results of the force's ongoing public perception survey, which explores a number of themes and factors influencing confidence in local policing, including the extent to which the force is perceived to understand community issues and the extent to which the force is perceived to use its stop and search powers fairly and respectfully. The results are broken down by gender, age bands and ethnicity, and whether the respondent has been a victim of crime or not, and reveal that:

- Those aged under 35 and BAME residents are more likely to be satisfied with the level of policing in their local area; to believe that local police are doing a good or excellent job; to feel that Essex Police is dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour in their area, and to be confident of receiving a good service from Essex Police if they were to report a crime.
- Females are significantly more likely than males to report a crime or incident to police, whilst victims with a disability are significantly less likely than those without a disability to report.
- BAME residents are slightly less likely than White residents to agree that Essex Police understands the issues affecting their community and to believe that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint to Essex Police.

- Agreement that Essex Police uses its stop and search powers fairly and respectfully has fallen, with BAME residents less likely than white residents to agree that this is the case.
- Under 35s and BAME residents are less likely than others to be aware of the role of the PFCC.

In November 2019, the PFCC's Performance and Resources Board received the results of Essex Police's latest staff survey, which was carried out in June 2019 in collaboration with Durham University Business School to assess progress made since the last staff survey in 2017. This revealed that perceptions of fairness have improved but are still slightly lower than the average for police forces. Academics working in this area provided reassurance that perceptions of fairness take a particularly long time to change, so the trajectory of the Essex force is positive. Perceptions of organisational support are now more positive, and staff report a better work / life balance. The findings demonstrated the positive impact of the force's Live Well, Feel Well programme.

A new "gender equality" measure was introduced into the survey in 2019 to ascertain more about the frequency and intensity with which police officers and staff experience treatment by someone in the force which they felt to be derogatory or demeaning and which they perceive to be due to their gender. Whilst the frequency of occurrence was generally low, the intensity of mistreatment reported was high, especially amongst female police officers. These findings are now being taken forward by the Essex Police Chief Officer Group (COG) and Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the staff associations and the Staff Engagement Steering Group.

Throughout the year, the PFCC's Performance and Resources Board has considered the evaluation of pilot initiatives to target certain crime types. For example, the Board received a report relating to the DRIVE project with domestic abuse perpetrators which ran from April 2016 to March 2019 and aimed to reduce the number of serial perpetrators of domestic abuse; to reduce the number of new and repeat victims; to reduce the harm caused to victims and children, and to intervene earlier to safeguard families living with high harm domestic abuse. This informed the development of the learning into a new initiative, Project Columbus, which takes the most effective tactics from DRIVE and aligns all the domestic abuse perpetrator workstreams, thus enhancing the ability of police and partners to respond effectively to domestic abuse. Following their scrutiny of this development work, the PFCC committed £137,017 in funding to the Columbus Project in 2019/20.

As the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA), the PFCC has likewise continued to receive quarterly HR reports detailing, amongst other things, staff sickness levels and the reasons for this; use of the Occupational Health service; employee case management; inclusion and diversity data and actions taken by the fire and rescue service to make its workforce more reflective of the local community; the work of the Inclusion and Diversity Delivery Group, and the training offered to and taken up by staff. In October 2019, the PFCCFRA's Performance and Resources Board also received a detailed report into the service's approach to promoting and managing mental health within the workplace. This has since been incorporated within the PFCCFRA's new People Strategy which

was approved early in 2020/21. During 2019/20, the PFCCFRA also received interim then final feedback from the “Everyone Matters” listening exercise undertaken with fire and rescue service staff between March and October 2019 as part of the service’s Professional and Inclusive Workplaces programme. This exercise engaged with more than half the workforce, and the findings have likewise been reflected in the new People Strategy.

Throughout 2019/20, the PFCC continued to exercise oversight of the delivery of the fire and rescue service’s Culture Improvement Plan, which includes the next phase of Dignity at Work training; activities to encourage the self-declaration of diversity data on people systems; awareness raising sessions on a range of inclusion and diversity themes (e.g. neurodiversity); an equality review of the service’s approach to recruitment and progression, and a commitment to implement a best practice apprenticeship and internship programme with a focus on increasing diversity.

During the year, the PFCC scrutinised the Gender Pay Gap reports produced by both the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Essex Police in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. As the PFCCFRA, the PFCC also scrutinised and approved the annual Pay Policy Statement produced by the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in accordance with the requirements of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011. This sets out, amongst other things, the remuneration of the PFCCFRA’s most senior employees; the remuneration of its lowest paid employees and the relationship (pay multiple) between the two.

During 2019/20, the PFCC’s office also instigated a quarterly desktop audit to ensure that all data that is required to be published by the PFCC, Essex Police or the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service under various Specified Information Orders is being made publicly available. This led to the updating of data regarding the proportion of PFCC and PFCCFRA staff who are female; from a BAME background, and / or who have a disability. During the year, the PFCC’s office also created a new transparency page on the PFCC website to provide a single point of access for the public to all this information.

### Decision Making, Policy and Strategy Development

During 2019/20, the PFCC’s report templates have continued to require report authors to set out the relevant equality considerations and the steps that will be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Significant decisions by the Commissioner (e.g. the implementation of a restructure of the PFCC’s staffing establishment) have been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

Through their Strategic Boards, the PFCC has overseen the development and implementation of key policies within Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service which impact on equality, diversity and inclusion. Examples include the force’s Agile Working Policy, which is designed to support employees’ work / life balance whilst making best use of the police estate and improving the force’s environmental impact, and Essex Police’s new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2023 as well as ECFRS’s new People Strategy (referenced above).

In December 2019, the PFCC and their Senior Management Team (SMT) considered a report into how they could improve their equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practice going forward. They accepted a proposal invited from Essex County Council to support the PFCC's team to evaluate the PFCC's current EDI policies and procedures against best practice; to develop a new EDI Strategy (including new EDI objectives) for the PFCC, and to develop and embed improved processes for undertaking EIAs. This work commenced in the final quarter of 2019/20 and will complete in 2020/21.

Towards the end of the financial year, the PFCC also updated their Complaints and Expression of Dissatisfaction Policy to accord with updated regulations and statutory guidance which came into effect on 1 February 2020. The opportunity was taken as part of this review to be more explicit in the policy as to how the PFCC will discharge their statutory duty under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a disabled person does not suffer any substantial disadvantage when accessing a service. Accordingly, the new policy places much greater emphasis on ensuring access to the complaints system, including by setting out a clear expectation that a discussion around any reasonable adjustments that may be required will take place at a much earlier stage of the complaints process going forward.

#### Strategic Partnership Working

During 2019/20, the PFCC and their staff team have continued to chair and attend numerous key strategic partnerships including the various Safeguarding Boards; the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership (SASP). During the year, the Essex Criminal Justice Board (ECJB), chaired by the PFCC, and the Reducing Reoffending Board, chaired by the Deputy PFCC, have established a joint Women's Service Action Team (WSAT) to develop and deliver a multi-agency delivery plan to keep women out of the criminal justice system (especially prisons) where possible and to reduce their reoffending. Following the publication of several national reports indicating disproportionate representation of BAME individuals within the criminal justice system, the ECJB and Reducing Reoffending Board also established a joint task and finish group to review the current picture in this regard across Southend, Essex and Thurrock. Existing data (where available) has been shared across agencies and further research / data analysis has been commissioned from Anglia Ruskin University which will report in 2020/21.

The PFCC's Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement has also continued to participate in the Essex Equality Network in order to keep up to date with and share best practice in this field.

#### Direct Service Delivery

The PFCC has continued to fulfil their obligations under the Police Reform Act 2002 to provide an Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme to ensure that the statutory and human rights of detainees are protected whilst in custody. During 2019/20, the scheme was updated to reflect updated guidance from the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) as well as changes in the way the scheme is supported within the PFCC's office. The scheme also participated in ICVA's new, voluntary quality assurance framework and received Silver

accreditation. During the year, the ICV scheme played a key role in identifying and securing an effective response to equality, diversity and inclusion issues, including raising concerns about access to translation services within custody. Consequently, the PFCC's Performance and Resources Board requested and received detailed updates on the performance of the service; the actions agreed with the provider to improve this, and plans to re-procure this provision.

2019/20 was the fifth year of operation for the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service (ERMS) delivered by the PFCC's office. 303 referrals were received during the year. This was a reduction of 146 (33%) compared with the previous year, however this was partly due to a fall in unsuitable referrals (for example, relating to possession of weapons offences). There were reductions in referrals from prisons, the National Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams and Essex Police, but an increase in referrals from victim services, the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Youth Services. The service also saw a rise in self-referrals. 3% of referrals related to domestic abuse; a further 3% related to hate crimes and incidents, and 2% of referrals related to sex offences. Of the 378 victims and 219 offenders approached to engage with the service, 383 consented.

Over the course of the year, 40 volunteers contributed more than 900 hours of service and delivered 63 successful outcomes. The service achieved a 93% participant satisfaction rate, with 78% of participants reporting that the process had a positive impact on them. 100% of referrers reported that they would refer to the service again. Priorities for the service for the coming year include:

- To work closely with the Domestic Abuse Investigation Team within Essex Police to increase referrals for domestic violence cases.
- To increase the facilitator pool trained to take on complex and sensitive cases (including domestic and sexual offences and other serious cases) and to build relationships with and promote the service to Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs).
- To increase referrals relating to hate crime.

The Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) – led by a member of the PFCC's staff – also continued its important work during 2019/20. Using more than £2.5m of funding secured from the Home Office, the PFCC and Essex County Council, the VVU continued to provide a range of services and interventions including mentoring; targeted youth services and diversionary activities; therapeutic interventions, and increased analyst capacity. The joint budget also funded a school wellbeing service in Thurrock; Hidden Harm Workers in Essex; a manager post within the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to consider the safeguarding arrangements when young people transition between the youth and adult justice systems, and a project based in hospital A&E departments to engage gang-affected young people at a key "reachable moment". The VVU also delivered a series of local and countywide conferences and training events for the front-line workforce, as well as a communications campaign and various pieces of evaluation work. The PFCC continues to chair the Violence and Vulnerability Strategic Executive Group and Round Table that exercises strategic oversight and direction of this work.

## Commissioning and Grant Giving

The PFCC continued to provide core funding from their Community Safety Fund to a range of partner organisations and partnerships, including those who support people with protected characteristics. Of the £1,195,908 core funding allocated in 2019/20, a total of £198,583 was allocated to the six Safeguarding Boards operating across Greater Essex whilst £443,835 was shared between the three Youth Offending Services.

The PFCC also continued to invest in their sexual violence and abuse support services contract, which ended on 31 March 2020. Over the course of the year, the service supported 3,676 new victims and achieved a 98% overall service user satisfaction rate. During the life of the contract, demand for these services rose so the PFCC invested additionally in pilot services to respond to the increasing volume and complexity of cases. The PFCC's office also developed its relationships with NHS England, which supported this work with additional funding. The learning from this has informed work undertaken during the year with NHSE to recommission the service, ready for a new contract to go live with effect from 1 April 2020. An open OJEU tender process launched in summer 2019 and, as part of the re-commissioning process, the PFCC funded Healthwatch Essex to engage victims of sexual violence and abuse in the evaluation stage, thus helping to ensure that the new service is victim centred, accessible to victims and responsive to their needs. Accessibility of the service to all victims also had to be demonstrated by bidders through the tender process, with the successful bidder submitting a comprehensive equality and diversity policy. The PFCC will now invest up to £5,281,657 from their Victims Commissioning Fund over the next five years in the provision of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and community-based support services, including specialist counselling services, therapeutic support, peer and family support groups and general advocacy.

In addition to this, the PFCC continued to contribute £159,649 towards the costs of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) jointly commissioned by the PFCC, Essex Police and NHS England to deliver forensic investigation as well as to provide practical and emotional victim support services, in order to encourage victims to come forward to report incidents and to achieve best evidence in rape and sexual assault cases. During 2019/20, the SARC supported 487 new victims. These contractual arrangements likewise expired on 31 March 2020 so the PFCC's staff team worked alongside Essex Police and NHSE during 2019/20 to recommission the service and mobilise a new contract to commence on 1 April 2020. Again, accessibility of the service to all victims was considered as part of the tender evaluation and the successful bidder submitted a comprehensive equality and diversity policy. Through the new contract, the PFCC will contribute up to £951,893 (25% of the total cost of the contract) from their Victims Commissioning Fund over the next five years to support victims of sexual abuse and to capture evidential material to continue to support successful criminal justice outcomes.

In addition to providing the above services, 2019/20 was the first year of the PFCC's new Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) contract. This enabled 2,848 new victims to be supported by an IDVA during the year. 253 cases were seen in refuges and 4,017 engagements were made through community support.

Throughout 2019/20, the PFCC also continued to provide financial support to several partnership projects supporting those with protected characteristics and promoting community cohesion. For example:

- The PFCC awarded £40,000 from their core budgets to the Children's Society (East) to continue the Children at Risk of Exploitation (CARE) project for a fourth year. Additional funding of £150,000 was provided through the Violence and Vulnerability Unit's joint budget. The CARE project engages young people at medium and high risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) who are not engaged in statutory provision and offers them direct, trauma-informed support including early intervention activities and one-to-one therapeutic interventions. The project also aims to increase awareness of CSE issues by delivering training to professionals.
- The PFCC allocated £55,000 to the Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) to deliver additional counselling services to both male and female young people and adults who have fallen victim to sexual abuse.
- The PFCC contributed £42,030 to the costs of Southend's Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Team (MARAT) Manager and two MARAT Administrators. This team enables effective data and information sharing between key stakeholders in order to safeguard victims of domestic abuse and ensure that cases are heard in a timely manner.
- The PFCC supported the fourth annual Festival of Rice and Spice with a £2,000 contribution to this free, one-day event which brings Colchester's diverse local communities together to celebrate the global themes of diversity and equality. The event creates an opportunity and platform for all local communities in Colchester to showcase and share their heritage through food, dance, music and visual arts. The network of organisations involved represents the Bangladeshi, black African, Caribbean, Chinese, Eastern European, Indian, Iraqi, Nepalese, Syrian and Turkish communities as well as refugees, migrant workers, travellers and local white British communities.
- The PFCC contributed £1,500 to the cost of the annual emergency services International Women's Day Conference; sent several delegates to the event, and marked the occasion by posting a number of quotes from its female leaders on its website and social media channels throughout the day.
- The PFCC made a £40,000 grant to Victim Support to continue to fund the Essex Hate Crime Prevention Coordinator. The Coordinator supports the work of the Essex Strategic Hate Crime Prevention Partnership and is responsible for delivering the commitments in the partnership Hate Crime Strategy. The PFCC also made a £700 crime and disorder reduction grant to support the delivery of activities to mark the annual Hate Crime Awareness Week. Activities delivered included pop-up stalls and the distribution of merchandise across the county to raise awareness of hate crime, a school poster competition and the refresh of leaflets for the Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCs).
- The PFCC contributed £500 towards the costs of a celebration event as part of Interfaith Week to mark the two-year anniversary of the signing of the Essex Faith

Covenant. The PFCC signed the Covenant in 2017 and has been represented on the Steering Group ever since. The event created an opportunity for communities of different faiths across Essex to hear from relevant speakers, including the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Committee on Faith and Society, on the work of interfaith covenants, as well as to showcase relevant projects.

Further small grants were made available through the PFCC's Community Safety Fund, Community Safety Development Fund and Victims Commissioning Fund. In total:

- £148,012 was allocated to projects seeking to divert children and young people from crime and anti-social behaviour
- £59,332 was committed to services to prevent and support victims of modern slavery and human trafficking
- £54,800 was awarded to projects tackling domestic abuse and supporting survivors
- £48,500 was committed to mental health support services (including projects promoting personal safety)
- £22,500 was awarded to support victims of hate crime
- £10,375 was provided to support older and disabled people
- £8,000 was awarded to a project promoting online safety amongst young people
- £4,700 was made available to projects tackling sexual abuse and exploitation and supporting its victims

The PFCC also awarded a £400 crime and disorder reduction grant to the Southend Ethnic Minority Forum (SEMF) to support its Annual General Meeting.

### Staff Training and Development

An initial workshop was held during the whole team meeting in June 2019 to raise awareness amongst the wider team regarding the PFCC's statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to begin reviewing and refreshing the PFCC's equality objectives. During the whole team meeting in September 2019, staff were consulted on an updated Equality and Diversity Statement and concluded that further work was required on this. Additional workshops were therefore held during the whole team meeting in January 2020 and the all staff away day in February 2020 to inform the development of the PFCC's new EDI Strategy, both of which were externally facilitated by members of Essex County Council's Equalities and Partnerships Team.

During 2019/20, managers received training from the Essex Police HR department on their responsibilities to staff. This covered topics including the flexible working arrangements that can be put in place for staff with caring responsibilities or medical conditions; how and when to make use of the Occupational Health service, and consideration of reasonable adjustments for staff returning from long term sick leave and / or suffering from disabilities or other long-term health conditions.

In December 2019, the PFCC commissioned Essex County Council to deliver mandatory face-to-face EDI training to all staff. This was originally scheduled to take place in March 2020 but was subsequently delayed by the global CoVID-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, this has been rescheduled to be delivered online during July and August 2020.

As referenced above, within the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service delivered by the PFCC's office, two experienced volunteers were promoted to its "advanced facilitator" pool and will now attend training in working with complex and sensitive cases, thus enabling them to provide a service in response to the most serious incidents, including sexual offences, domestic violence and homicide.