

**Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2019****Report to: the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex**

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# Covid-19 Fixed Penalty Notices

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## Strategic Change Directorate

**Date:** 23 June 2020  
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## 1. Aim and Purpose

The aim of this report is to analyse data relating to Covid-19 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for the six-week period from 3 April 2020 to 14 May 2020. The purpose is to inform the Chief Officer Group of any trends within the data.

## 2. Executive Summary

216 Covid-19 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPNs) investigations were created in the six weeks to 14 May 2020. This is a comparatively low amount: Essex Police is seventh lowest (out of eight Forces) in their Most Similar Group (MSG) for the total number of FPNs issued, and sixth in their MSG for FPNs issued per 1,000 population.<sup>1</sup> Of the 38 police forces in England<sup>2</sup>, 30 issued more FPNs per 1,000 population than Essex Police.

In line with that which has been [reported in England](#), there is a relationship between the temperature (and public holidays), and the number of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) investigations relating to Covid-19. Also in line with the pattern in England, most suspects in Essex were male (88% in Essex v. 80% in England), with the highest proportion aged between 18-24 years (35% in Essex v. 37% in England).

Suspects generally committed offences within the district in which they live, and over half were known as a suspect on another Athena investigation.

No ethnic appearance<sup>3</sup> was recorded (or was stated as 'Unknown') for 17.7% of suspects (40) in Essex compared to almost a quarter (23%) of FPNs in England. As a point of comparison, a far smaller proportion of stop and searches in Essex had no record of ethnicity: 6.5% in the past 12 months.

For those FPNs that were issued where ethnicity was known or stated, 12.9% of suspects (24) had a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) appearance. This is almost twice the proportion of Essex BAME residents recorded in the 2011 census (6.8%) but includes FPNs issued to non-Essex residents.

Thirteen of the 24 BAME individuals issued with a ticket gave a home address outside Essex. Taking account of this, 7.7% of FPNs (11) were issued to persons of BAME appearance who live in Essex, which is disproportionate compared to the Essex resident population recorded in the 2011 census (6.8%).

Of the 44 individuals who gave a home address outside Essex, 29.5% (13) had a BAME appearance.<sup>4</sup> In England, a fifth (20%) of FPNs were issued to individuals with a BAME appearance compared to a 13.7% BAME resident population in England.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that data for police forces in England is for the period 27 March 2020 to 8 June 2020. Site: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/resources/force-totals-to-8-june-england> [accessed 23 June 2020]. When reference is made to Essex figures for the remainder of this document, however, the data period is 3 April 2020 to 14 May 2020

<sup>2</sup> All forces in England (including Metropolitan), but not City of London, BTP or MoD Police

<sup>3</sup> More information on the method used when discussing ethnicity can be found in section 3 ("Methodology")

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that small sample sizes can disproportionately skew proportions.

### 3. Methodology

FPNs have been recorded inconsistently on Athena. In some cases where multiple individuals were involved in one incident, separate investigations were created for each individual; in other incidents involving multiple suspects, only one investigation was created (but with multiple suspects).

In total, 226 suspects (215 of which are unique) were identified in relation to the total 216 investigations created on Athena. For the purposes of this report, the number of investigations (216) was used when discussing the location and type of breach; the total number of suspects (226) was used when referring to demographic breakdowns.

Ethnicity is recorded within investigations in two fields: "Ethnic Appearance" and "Ethnicity Self Code". "Ethnic Appearance" is completed by the investigating officer. "Ethnicity Self Code" is defined by the suspect and is not mandatory. "Ethnicity Self Code" data were not present (either due to the field not being completed or "Unknown" being entered) in relation to the records for 23.0% (52) of individuals; by contrast, "Ethnic Appearance" data were not present for 17.7% (40 individuals). Furthermore, when using the "Ethnicity Self Code" field, those of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) appearance account for 12.4% of those who were issued with FPNs, compared to 12.9% when the "Ethnic Appearance" field is used. For the purposes of this report, therefore, "Ethnic Appearance" (as defined by the officer) has been used when reference is made to ethnicity.

### 4. Key Findings

#### a. Investigations

- Out of the 38 police forces in England, 30 issued more FPNs per 1,000 population than Essex Police. Essex was sixth lowest (out of eight Forces) in its Most Similar Group (MSG) for FPNs issued per 1,000 population.
- As has been experienced in the rest of England, there is a relationship between the temperature (and public holidays), and the number of Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) investigations relating to Covid-19. The highest number of investigations was recorded in the week of Friday 8 May to Thursday 14 May (46); over half these (26) were during the Early May Bank Holiday (VE Day) weekend. The highest daily number of investigations was 14 on 9 May 2020.
- Chelmsford and Colchester recorded the highest numbers of FPN investigations with 29 each. The next highest districts were Tendring (26) and Thurrock (24).
- 'Breach of COVID-19 legislation' was the most cited MO (35.6%, n=77), followed by 'Driving without a reasonable excuse / Unnecessary travel' (29.2%, n=63). A further 28 references were made to 'Being at the location without a valid reason', 23 to 'Visiting family / friend's house' and 14 to 'Refusing to' move on' / 'go home'.

**b. Suspects**

- Nine of the 215 unique suspects had two FPNs issued against them, and one had three. More than half (54.4%, n=117) were already known to police, having been previously identified as a suspect on Athena (Essex Police’s crime, intelligence and custody recording system).
- Nearly three quarters (72.1%, n=163) of identified suspects live in Essex. Of these, nearly half (44%) had their latest home address recorded as Tendring (27), Thurrock (23) or Colchester (22). All three districts are those with the highest volume of FPN investigations recorded. Of those individuals who live in Essex, 61.6% breached in the same district as their home address.
- No ethnic appearance was recorded for 17.7% of suspects (40). Where known or stated, those of BAME appearance account for 12.9% (24) of all tickets issued.
- Half or more of those of Black, Asian and ‘Other’ ethnic appearance who were issued with an FPN gave a home address that was outside Essex:

Ethnic Appearance	Essex Residents	Non-Residents	% Essex Residents	% Non-Resident
White	131	31	80.9%	19.1%
Black	7	8	46.7%	53.3%
Asian	3	4	42.9%	57.1%
Other	1	1	50.0%	50.0%
Mixed	0	0	0.0%	0.0%
<b>BAME Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>45.8%</b>	<b>54.2%</b>

- For those FPNs that were issued where the suspect’s ethnicity was known or stated, 12.9% of suspects (24) had a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) appearance. This is almost twice the proportion of BAME Essex residents recorded in the 2011 census (6.8%). For suspects who gave a home address in Essex, those with a BAME appearance account for 7.7%.

Total Suspects (where ethnic appearance known/stated)				
Ethnicity	# Issued	% FPNs Issued	Essex Pop (2011)	% pt. Diff
White	162	87.1%	93.2%	-6.1%
Black	15	8.1%	2.0%	6.1%
Asian	7	3.8%	2.7%	1.0%
Mixed	0	0.0%	1.6%	-1.6%
Other	2	1.1%	0.4%	0.7%
<b>BAME Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>

Essex Residents Only (where ethnic appearance known/stated)				
Ethnicity	# Issued	% FPNs Issued	Essex Pop (2011)	% pt. Diff
White	131	92.3%	93.2%	-1.0%
Black	7	4.9%	2.0%	2.9%
Asian	3	2.1%	2.7%	-0.6%
Mixed	0	0.0%	1.6%	-1.6%
Other	1	0.7%	0.4%	0.3%
<b>BAME Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

- Those of Black ethnic appearance were most disproportionately represented. Those with a Black ethnic appearance who live in Essex were issued with over double the number of FPNs per 1,000 population (0.20) than those with a White ethnic appearance (0.08).

- Fewer FPNs were issued per 1,000 population for every ethnic group in Essex compared to those that have been issued in England (Essex residents only). Please note, however, that small volumes can disproportionately skew rates per 1,000 population.

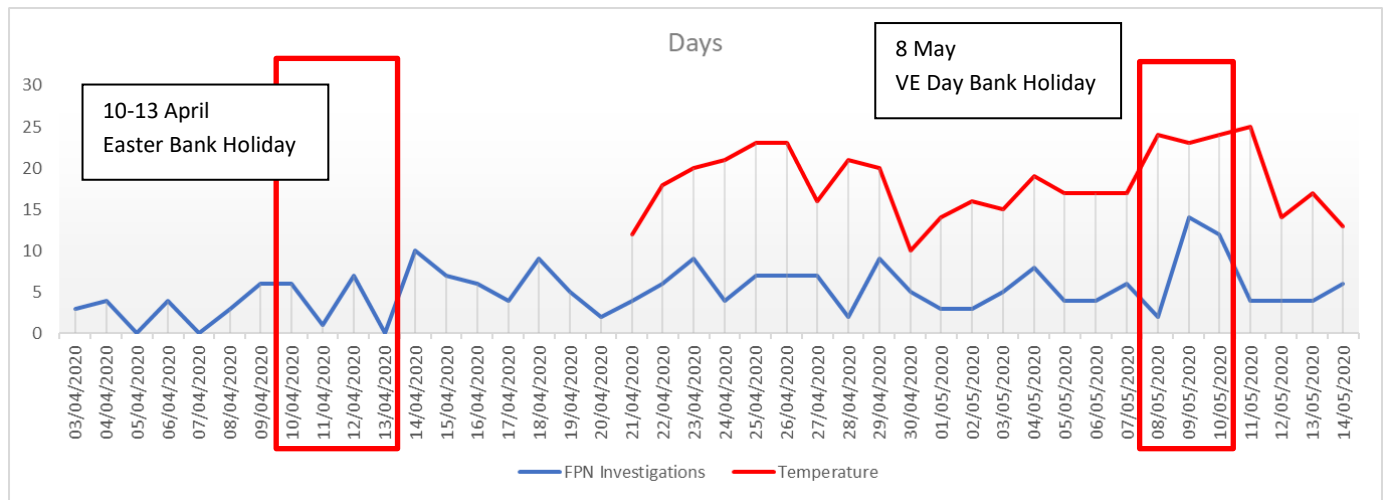
FPNs Issued in Essex (Residents Only)			FPNs Issued in England		
Ethnicity	Tickets Issued	FPNs per 1,000 pop.	Ethnicity	Tickets Issued	FPNs per 1,000 pop.
White	131	0.08	White	12415	0.27
Black	7	0.20	Black	786	0.43
Asian	3	0.06	Asian	1886	0.46
Other	1	0.14	Other	157	0.29
Mixed	0	0.00	Mixed	314	0.45

## 5. Analysis

### a. Investigations

216 Athena Non-Crime investigations were recorded in relation to COVID-19 FPNs in the six weeks to 14 May 2020. As has been experienced in England, there is a relationship between the temperature and the number of COVID-19 FPN investigations recorded.

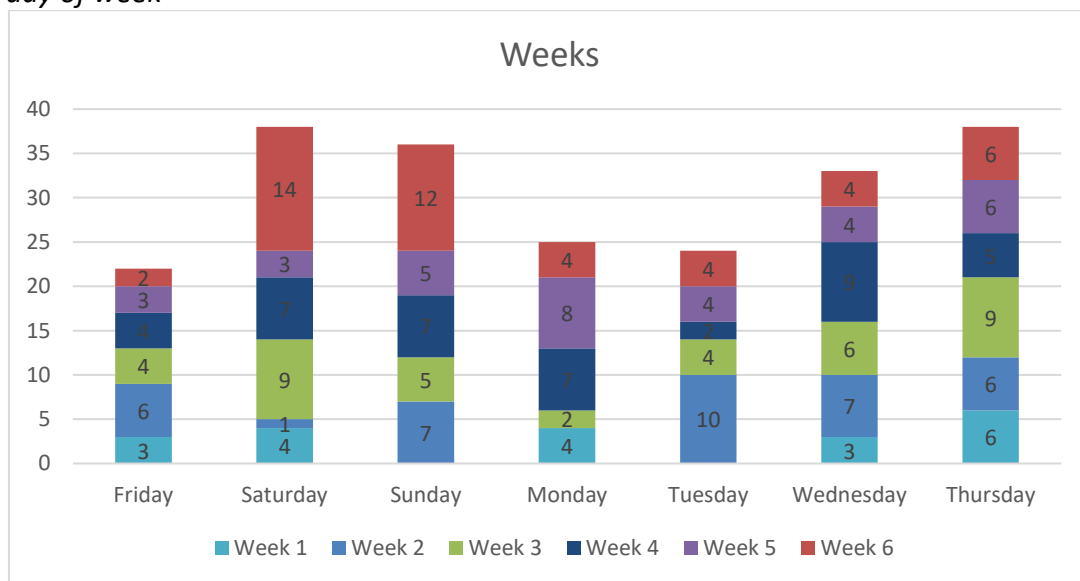
Figure 1 – daily count of FPNs investigations



### Day of Week

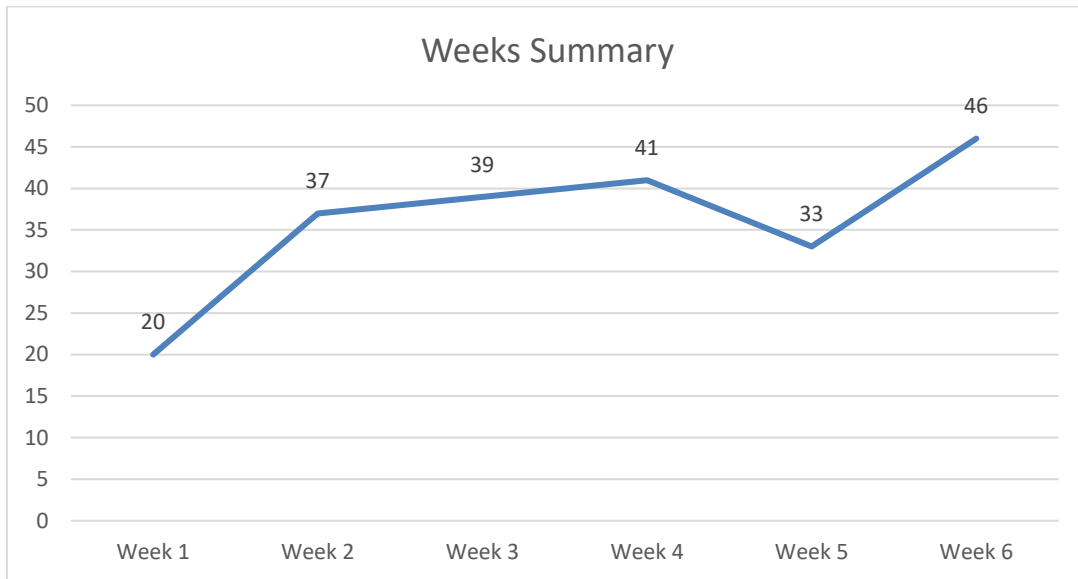
Saturday and Thursday are the days with the highest number of FPNs investigations recorded – 38 FPN investigations were recorded for each across the six-week period. Sunday is the second highest, with 36 FPN investigations recorded in total.

Figure 2 – day of week



Lockdown began on 23 March 2020, whilst the first recorded Covid-19 FPNs investigation was recorded on 3 April 2020. The highest number of investigations recorded was in week six as a result of the Early May Bank Holiday (VE Day); 14 and 12 FPN investigations were recorded respectively on Saturday 9 May 2020 and Sunday 10 May 2020. These two days had the highest volumes throughout the period of recording.

Figure 3 – weekly summary

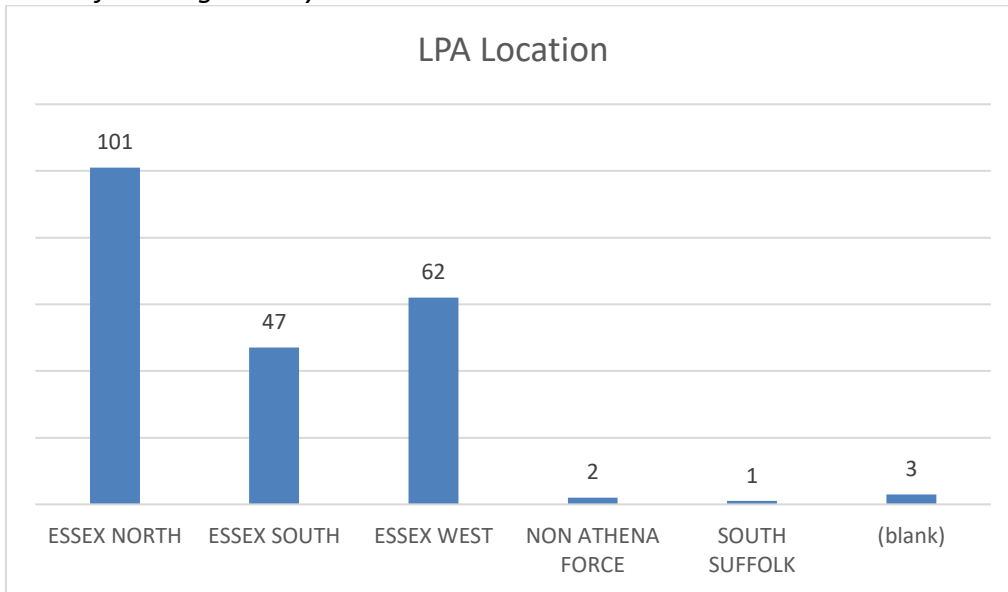




**Location of Investigation**

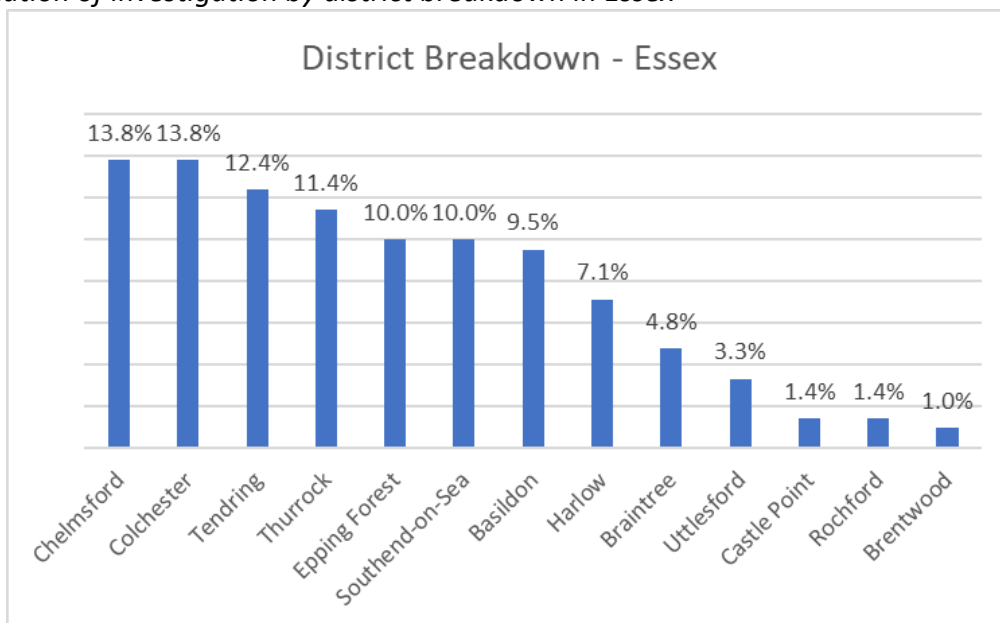
There has not been a consistent approach to recording Covid-19 FPN investigations. Of the 216 investigations recorded, 210 (97.2%) were within Essex; three were outside Essex and three do not have an incident location recorded.

Figure 4 – location of investigation by LPA breakdown



Chelmsford and Colchester (29 in each) recorded the highest number of investigations, followed by Tendring (26) and Thurrock (24). The fewest number of FPNs investigations were recorded in Brentwood (2), Castle Point (3) and Rochford (3) districts.

Figure 5 – location of investigation by district breakdown in Essex



**Reason for FPN**

"Breach of COVID-19 legislation" or "breaking COVID-19 lockdown regulations" were the most common reasons for FPN investigations being recorded (77), followed by "Driving without a reasonable excuse / Unnecessary travel" (63).

Figure 6 – reason for FPN investigation to be recorded

Themes identified	No. of references to theme
Reason: "Breach of COVID-19 legislation" or "breaking COVID-19 lockdown regulations"	77
Driving without a reasonable excuse / Unnecessary travel	63
Being at the location without a valid reason	28
Visting family / friends house	23
Refusing to "move on" / "go home"	14
No reason given, just "COVID-19 FPN"	6
House party	5

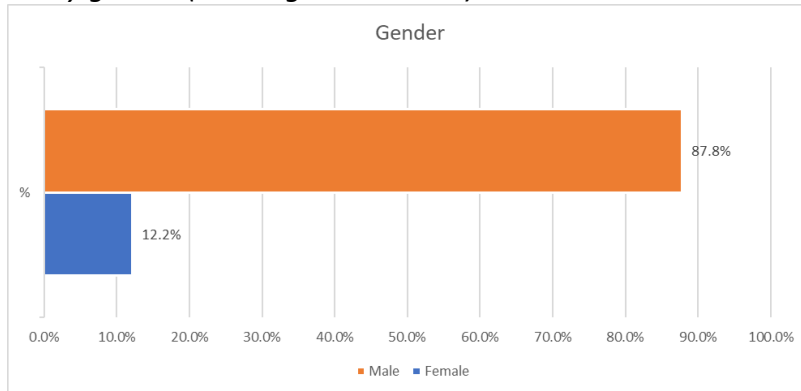
**b. Suspects**

**Age and Gender**

The 216 records identify a total of 226 suspects, ten of whom were issued with more than one FPN.

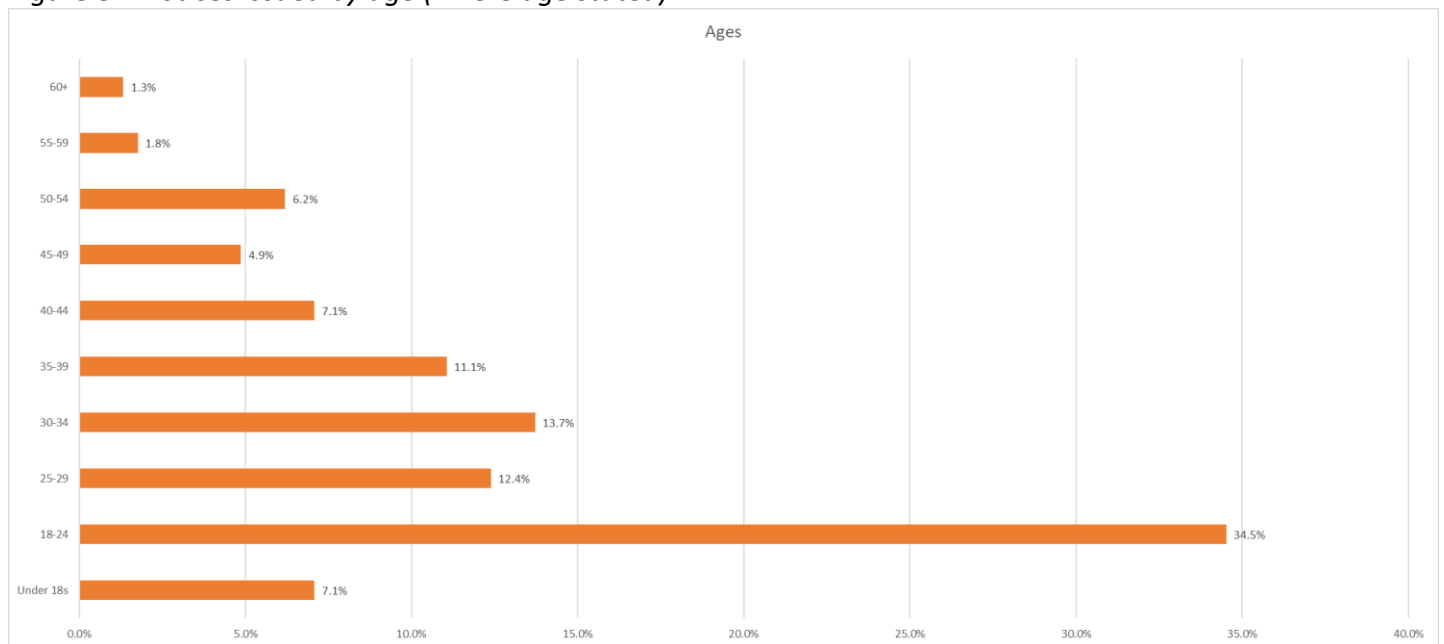
87.8% of FPN recipients were male.

*Figure 7 – notices issued by gender (where gender stated)*



Those aged 18-24 years accounted for the largest proportion of those issued with FPNs (34.5%, n=78).

*Figure 8 – notices issued by age (where age stated)*



## **Ethnicity**

87.1% of FPNs were issued to those of White ethnic appearance (where known or stated).

15 suspects (8.1%) issued with an FPN had a Black ethnic appearance (the second highest ethnic appearance). Of these, 8 gave a home address that was outside of Essex.

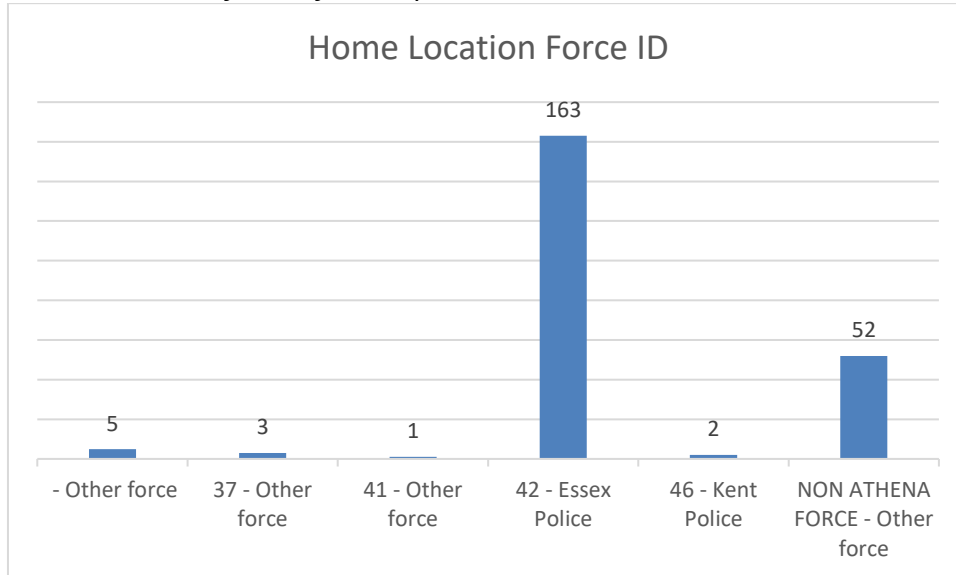
Those of BAME appearance account for 12.9% (24) of those issued with tickets. This is almost double the 6.8% BAME population recorded in the 2011 census.

Those with a Black ethnic appearance who live in Essex (i.e. those who gave a home address within Essex), were issued with over double the number of FPNs per 1,000 population than those with a White ethnic appearance.

**Home address of persons issued with FPNs**

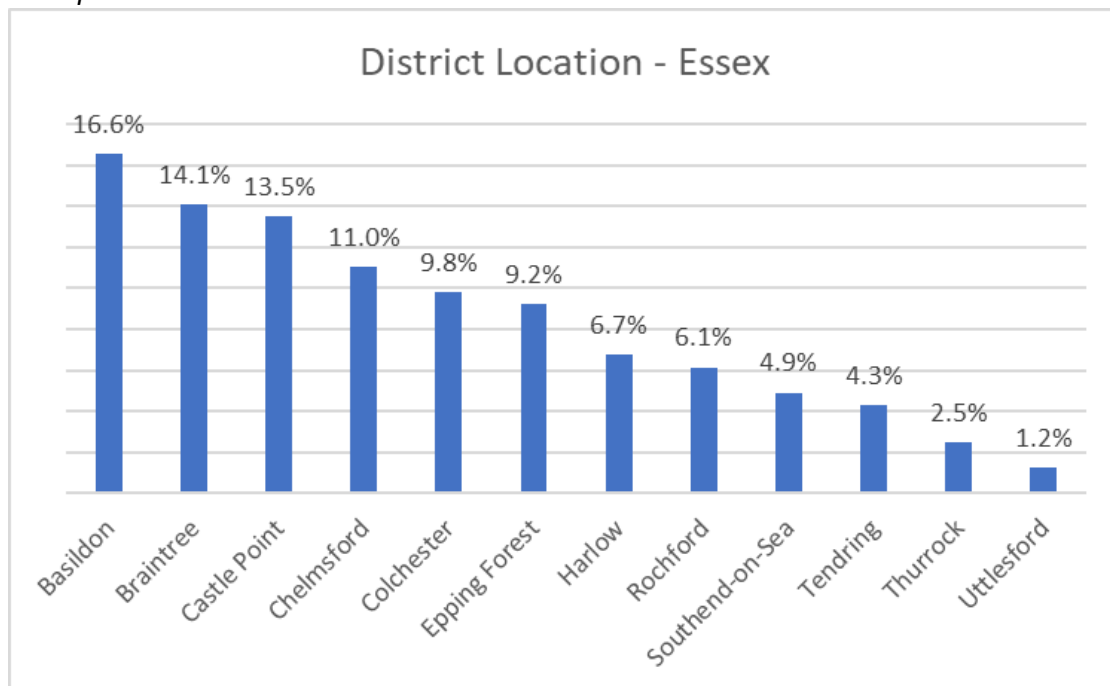
Of 226 suspects identified, 163 (72.1%) have home addresses in Essex.

Figure 9 – latest home address of identified suspects



Of 163 suspects who live in Essex, 27 live in Tendring; 23 live in Thurrock; 22 live in Colchester. All three districts are also the districts with large volumes of FPNs. Of those individuals who live within Essex, 61.6% breached in the same district as their home address.

Figure 10 – suspects' home address district location



**Previously linked suspects**

Of 215 unique suspects identified, nine were issued with two FPNs, and one was issued with three.

Furthermore, 54.4% (117) of these 215 unique suspects were previously named as suspects for non-Covid-19-related offences; 82 of these 117 suspects (70.1%) had links to three or more investigations (one suspect was a suspect in 80 previous investigations).

*Figure 11 – most common previous investigation types against those issued with Covid-19 FPN*

