

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

Since the last HR update, as at 31st March 2020, the officer strength full time equivalent (fte) has increased by 12.73 fte to 3306.08 fte, as at 30th June 2020. This is 62.92 fte under the establishment of 3369.00 and whilst officer recruitment in June 20 was lower than originally profiled due to the impact of COVID-19, the force is only marginally lower than the original projected position as at 30th June 2020 due to a reduction in attrition.

The police staff strength as at 30th June 2020 was 2061.08 fte, which is 177.79 fte under the establishment of 2238.87. Whilst the fte is similar to the position reported

as at 31st March 2020, the force vacancy rate has increased slightly (from 7.65% to 7.94%). This is mainly due to an increase in the establishment as a result of force growth posts being added to SAP.

The PCSO strength as at 30th June 2020 was 107.45 fte, which is 1.45 fte under the establishment of 109.00 and a net reduction of 4.33 fte since the last HR report, as at 31st March 2020. Note, 2.00 fte Chelmsford funded posts are due to be removed from SAP, which will result in the strength fte being aligned to the establishment.

As at 30th June 2020, there were 516 specials in post, which is a reduction of 5 when compared to the last HR data, as at 31st March 2020 (521). Due to the COVID pandemic 3 recent courses have been postponed and intake sizes have reduced to enforce safe social distancing practices, however recruitment has now recommenced with 26 specials joining this financial year to date (April to June 2020).

The total duty hours worked for the period April to June 2020 increased to 61,269 compared to 51,961 for the same period last year, with the average hours worked per person also increasing from 33.67 to 39.91.

Officer, staff and special turnover is lower for the period April to June 2020 when compared to the same period last year. Officer turnover has reduced from 2.09% to 1.36%, staff has reduced from 2.17% to 1.94% and specials turnover has reduced from 5.42% to 3.08%. PCSOs has increased from 0.86% to 2.54%, however this only equates to a headcount of 3 leavers.

The representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers has increased to a headcount of 109 (3.22% of the total number of officers) as at 30th June 2020; an increase of 2 compared to the last HR data as at 31st March 2020 (3.17%). As previously reported, this demonstrates the highest proportion of BAME officers in the force over the last 6 years. The percentage representation of officers within the force is 3.34% under the proportion of BAME individuals within the economically active population of Essex (6.56%¹).

As at 3rd July 2020, there are 100 BAME candidates in the officer recruitment process, which equates to 10.58% of all applications.

For staff, the BAME headcount has increased from 85 as at 31st March 2020 (3.74%) to 88 as at 30th June 2020 (3.88%). PCSO's have remained static from a headcount perspective, but due to the reduction in the overall number of PCSOs the proportion has increased from 2.50% to 2.59%.

The number of BAME specials has reduced by 1 from 36 (6.91%) as at 31st March 2020 to 35 (6.78%) as at 30 the June 2020.

The headcount of female officers has remained at 1150, however as a proportion of the total workforce, it has reduced marginally from 34.80% to 33.97%.

¹ 2011 National Census Data

For staff the proportion of females has reduced slightly from 65.01% as at 31st March 2020 to 64.85% as at 30th June 2020, whereas PCSOs have increased marginally from 55.00% to 55.17% (albeit the headcount has reduced by 2).

For specials, the female headcount has increased from 167 (32.05%) to 172 (33.33%).

Absence

For Officers, for April to June 2020, the average days lost per person was 1.56, which is a reduction of 0.72 average days lost per person when compared to April to June 2019 (2.28). This is the lowest level of absence over the last 6 years.

The average days lost per person, for staff, has reduced to 1.67 for the period April to June 2020, when compared to April to June 2019 (2.36).

For PCSOs, in the period April to June 2020, the average days lost per person was 3.14, which is a reduction of 0.22 average days lost per person when compared to the same period in 2019 (3.36). This is also the lowest level of absence over the last 3 years.

In relation to absence term, there has been a reduction in the average days lost per person for all absence terms for both officers and staff. For PCSOs, there have been reductions in short and medium term absence, but an increase 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. For PCSOs, respiratory absence accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost.

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has reduced from 404 as at 31st March 2020 to 366 as at 30th June 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 30th June 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 March 2020. 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 30th June 2020

The officer strength, as at 31st March 2020 was 3306.08 fte, which is 62.92 fte under the establishment of 3369.00. This is a net increase of 12.73 fte since the last HR report as at 31st March 2020.

The police staff strength as at 30th June 2020 was 2061.08 fte, which is 177.79 fte under the establishment of 2238.87. Whilst the fte is similar to the position reported as at 31st March 2020 (2060.68 fte), the force vacancy rate has increased slightly (from 7.65% to 7.94%). This is mainly due to an increase in the establishment as a result of force growth posts being added to SAP.

The PCSO strength as at 30th June 2020 was 107.45 fte, which is 1.45 fte under the establishment of 109.00 and a net reduction of 4.33 fte since the last HR report as at 31st March 2020. Note, whilst the force is marginally under the required establishment, it has recently been confirmed that 2.00 fte posts funded by Chelmsford City Council will no longer continue. Therefore, once those posts have been removed from SAP, the PCSO strength fte will be aligned to establishment.

There are currently no PCSO intakes planned for the remainder of 2020/21, however this position is under continuous review and, if required, the force has the capacity to commence a PCSO course towards the latter part of 2020/21.

Commands with the Highest Vacancy Numbers

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

The functions with the highest vacancy rate as at 30th June 2020 are Crime & Public Protection Command (12.52%) and Serious Crime (10.83%). When combined Support Services and HR and Learning and Development have a vacancy rate of 26.72%.

In relation to the Crime & Public Protection Command, the vacancy rate of 12.52% (38.31 fte vacancies) is marginally higher than the position reported as at 31st March 2020 (12.02%). The majority of vacancies are in the roles of Child Abuse Investigation Teams, Paedophile Online Investigation Teams and Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Teams. A total of 15 officers are due to move into Crime & Public Protection on 13th July 2020 with a further 5 joining on 17th August 2020. In addition to these 20, a further 4 have been successful for roles but release dates are yet to be agreed. Once these officers have commenced in post, it will result in a significant reduction in the vacancy percentage.

The Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) have the third highest vacancy rate of 10.83%. However, whilst the strength fte has marginally reduced when compared to the position last reported as at 31st March 2020, the vacancy percentage has reduced from 11.18% to 10.83%. This is a result of 2.00 fte posts being removed from the

establishment. In relation to the vacancies, the majority are in the roles of Major Investigation Team DC (whereby officers have been selected and are awaiting a release date), Covert Surveillance DC roles which will be recruited to in line with the national training courses and Volume Fraud DC's which recruitment has just commenced for.

In relation to Support Services and HR and Learning and Development, the vacancy rate of 26.72% (18.60 fte vacancies) is a significant increase when compared to the position last reported as at 31st March 2020. This is predominately due to the establishment increasing (as a result of the uplift programme) by 11 from 58.60 to 69.60. Of the 18.60 fte vacancies, the majority are in the roles of Operational Investigative Skills Training PC/DC, Professional Development Officer PC and roles within the HR Innovation Team and Positive Action team, all of which are actively being recruited to at time of writing.

To note, Operational Policing Command (OPC) had one of the highest vacancy rates as at 31st March 2020, however they are no longer in the 'top 3' due to their vacancy rate reducing from 10.91% to 8.51%.

Staff

For staff, HQ Directorate have a vacancy rate of 16.95%, which is a significant increase when compared to the position as at 31st March 20 (4.44%); as a result this department now has the highest vacancy rate in force.

However, it should be noted that the strength fte has actually increased from 102.68 fte to 105.47 fte; the increase in the vacancy rate is due to the establishment growing by 19.54 established posts (from 107.45 to 126.99). This increase is within the units of Management Vetting, Professional Standards Investigations, Data Quality & Compliance, Information Security and Media. Recruitment into these roles is at various stages of the recruitment process including advert, shortlisting, interview and pre-employment checks.

SCD have the second highest vacancy with 13.91%, however this has reduced when compared to the position last reported where the vacancy rate was 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 (3.32 fte) however that has reduced when compared to the last HR update (5.21 fte) and all of those vacancies have now been recruited to with candidates undergoing pre-employment checks. A number of other roles in SCD are vacant, however, as with the HQ Directorate, recruitment into these roles is at various stages of the process.

The Operational Policing Command has the third highest vacancy rate with 12.56%, however that has reduced when compared to last HR update as at 31st March 2020 (13.28%). The majority of vacancies are in the roles of Casualty Reduction

Assistants (10.79 fte). Some of the vacancies are as a result of growth posts, which are being recruited to currently. In addition, a number of these posts were held temporarily to reduce any financial risk to the force as a result of COVID-19 and Safer Essex Roads Partnership activity being reduced, due to reduced movement on the roads. This position is being monitored, but it is likely they will be recruited into in the future.

For information, the Strategic Change & Performance Directorate had the second highest vacancy rate in the last HR data update (14.46%), however that has reduced to 8.44% resulting in it no longer being in the 'top 3'.

The total number of vacancies of 177.79 fte, when measured as strength fte against establishment, means the force currently has a vacancy rate of 7.94%. 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).

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). Recruitment continues despite the COVID pandemic with virtual methods of assessment in place and support for recruiting managers from HR.

It should also be noted that some of the vacancies are as a result of new growth posts that have recently been added to SAP. These are actively being recruited to and are at various stages of the recruitment process. These posts are monitored the force growth board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable.

At the time of writing, there were 64 external candidates in pre-employment checks for a range of roles across the force.

2. Specials Data: Headline Figures

As at 30th June 2020, there were 516 specials in post, which is a reduction of 5 when compared to the last HR data as at 31st March 2020 (521).

As previously reported, 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 attrition for the financial year to date (April to June 2020) is 5.33. This is lower than the average for the same period last year (9.67) and lower than the monthly average for all of 2019/20 (13.67).

Of the 16 leavers this financial year to date, 12 have resigned and 4 have left to join the regulars.

Specials Duty Hours

The total duty hours worked for the period April to June 20 increased to 61,269 compared to 51,961 for the same period last year with the average hours worked per person also increasing from 33.67 to 39.91.

The total duty hours worked of 61,629 is an average of 20,876 a month. This is the equivalent of, on average, 1305 specials working 16 hours a month (an increase when compared to the same period last year where this figure stood at 1082).

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 2020/21

Officers

As reported in the last update, a total of 463.74 fte joined in 2019/20, which represented the highest level of recruitment over the last 10 years. As a result, the strength fte ended 76.35 fte over establishment as at 31st March 2020. This meant that the force was in a strong position to achieve the increased establishment level for the 31st March 2021, following the Home Office uplift announcement.

The current situation regarding COVID-19 creates a significant risk for the recruitment of all roles, however recruitment remains a focus and details of the steps that are being taken to mitigate this risk are identified in section 6.3 (risks / mitigation).

For the period April to June 2020, there was 1 intake of new recruits scheduled. This was originally projected to be 52.00 fte, however, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the impact that this has had on recruitment, the intake was marginally lower than projected with 46.00 fte joining. In addition to this, a further 3.50 fte officers have re-joined during this period, as well as 6.00 fte officers who have transferred in. As a result, total recruitment for the financial year to date is 55.50 fte, which is over the original projected position of 52.00 fte.

In addition to this, it should be noted that turnover has also reduced meaning the force is further ahead of where it projected to be, which would assist should future recruitment intakes continue to be affected by COVID-19.

There are 4 further recruitment intakes scheduled for the remainder of the 2020/21 financial year (August 20, November 20, January 21 and March 21). Each intake has the capacity to train up to 80.00 fte (total of 320.00 fte). To ensure the end of year strength fte does not exceed the required establishment of 3669.00, recruitment against the plan will be monitored and the March 21 intake will be reduced if necessary.

In relation to applications, the average weekly number in April 2020 was high at 115, however this increase was due to applications for the Detective Fast Track scheme cohort. In May 2020, application numbers reduced to a more typical level (average of 59 a week), which is comparative to the average seen for the previous quarter (average of 58 a week for the period January 20 to March 20). In June 20 the average increased marginally to 60 a week.

Following the cancellation of the national SEARCH Assessment Centre Essex Police are an early adopter of the new national virtual online officer assessment process. The force placed 346 candidates into this process on the 10th June 2020 and the results are due to be with for Force by week commencing 6th July 2020.

The force has also adopted self-declaration, conditional offers and virtual methods of assessment, in line with College of Policing guidance, to keep candidates moving through the recruitment pipeline. All departments involved in the clearance stage activities are on standby to support clearances to ensure optimum opportunities exist for resources to be cleared for the August intake.

Successful achievement of the strategic recruitment ambitions for 2020/21 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.

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

So far, this financial year to date (April to June 2020), 26 specials have joined, which is similar to the number of joiners for the same period last year financial year (28).

As previously reported, 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, was the highest level of average weekly applications seen in a quarter over the last 8 quarters. Positively, this level of applications has continued in 2020/21 with 270 applications being received for the period April to June 2020 (average of 21 a week).

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.

There are currently 12 more courses scheduled between July 2020 and March 2021 (with an option of including a further one in March 2021, if required). Currently, due to social distancing measures, the maximum capacity per course is 10 candidates

which, if filled to capacity, would result in a further 120 specials joining in the remainder of this financial year. It should be noted that if social distancing measures were reduced to a 1 metre requirement (instead of 2), this could result in the capacity increase to up to 15/16 per course.

Any candidates that were due to attend one of the cancelled courses have now been reallocated to other intakes.

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. These meetings ensure effective oversight and governance of all volume recruitment pipelines and selection processes.

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

As reported in the last HR update, the turnover (when measured as the total number of leavers as a proportion of the total workforce) reduced in 2019/20 when compared 2018/19. This trend of reduced turnover has continued into 2020/21. So far, this financial year to date (April to June 2020) a total of 46 (headcount) officers have left. This is a turnover rate of 1.36% which is 0.73 percentage points lower than the same period last financial year (2.09%).

For staff there have been 44 leavers, which equates to a turnover percentage of 1.94%, which is 0.23 percentage points lower than the same period last year (2.17%).

In contrast, PCSO turnover has increased to 2.54% for the period April to June 2020, compared with 0.86% for the same period last financial year, however, this only equates to 3 leavers.

In relation to specials, a total of 16 have left for the period April to June 2020. This equates to a turnover percentage of 3.08% which is 2.34 percentage points lower than the same period last year (5.42%).

5. Gender & BAME Representation as at 30th June 2020

The representation of Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) officers has increased to a headcount of 109 as at 30th June 2020. This is an increase of 2 when compared to the last HR data, as at 31st March 2020. This is a marginal percentage point increase of 0.05% from 3.17% as at 31st March 2020, to 3.22% as at 30th June 2020.

As previously reported, this representation demonstrates the highest proportion of BAME officers in the force over the last 6 years and is now only 3.34 percentage points under the economically active population of Essex (6.56%²).

² 2011 National Census Data

Of the 46 new recruits this financial year to date (April to June 2020), a total of 3 are BAME, which equates to 6.52%, which is similar to the economically active population of 6.56%. Of the 10 re-joiners / transferees, 1 was BAME (10%). Therefore, of the total 56 joiners for this period, a total of 4 were BAME, which equates to 7.14%.

There are currently 100 BAME candidates in the officer recruitment process, which equates to 10.58% of all applications (as at 3rd July 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 100 BAME candidates in process, 10 have passed the selection process and are currently going through pre-employment checks, with 5 hoping to be cleared in time for the August 2020 intake and 5 for later intakes.

The Diversity and Inclusion team continue to make direct contact with BAME applicants that fail short listing to offer support regarding the application process. If a BAME candidate withdraws their application, contact is made to establish the reasons why and support offered. Applicants that pass the eligibility stage are allocated a buddy to help, guide and advise the applicant through all stages of the process.

For staff, the BAME headcount has increased from 85 as at 31st March 2020 (3.74%) to 88 as at 30th June 2020 (3.88%). The number of PCSOs has remained static from a headcount perspective, but due to the reduction in the overall number of PCSOs, the proportion has increased from 2.50% to 2.59%.

The number of BAME specials has reduced by 1 from 36 (6.91%) as at 31st March 2020 to 35 (6.78%) as at 30 the June 2020.

The headcount of female officers has remained at a headcount of 1150, however as a proportion of the total workforce, it has reduced from 34.08% to 33.97%. Of the 46 new recruits this financial year to date, a total of 14 are female, which equates to 30.43%. Of the 10 re-joiners / transferees 2 were female, which equates 20.00%. In total, of the 56 new joiners, 16 were female, which equates to 28.57%.

For staff the proportion of females has reduced slightly from 65.01% as at 31st March 2020 to 64.85% as at 30th June 2020, whereas the proportion of PCSOs has increased marginally from 55.00% to 55.17% (albeit the headcount has reduced by 2). For specials, the headcount has increased from 167 (32.05%) to 172 (33.33%).

Looking forward, the media department are developing a media campaign entitled 'We Value Difference', which includes a wide range of protected characteristics that include BAME and females. This follows on from the previous successful diversity media campaign that led to an increase in applications from BAME candidates.

6. Absence and Adjusted / Recuperative

Summary Numbers

For officers, in the period April to June 2020, the average days lost per person was 1.56, which is a reduction of 0.72 average days lost per person when compared to

the same period in 2019/20 financial year (1.56). This is also the lowest level of absence for this period over the last 6 financial years.

For staff, the average days lost per person has reduced to 1.67 for the period April to June 2020, when compared to April to June 2019 (2.36).

For PCSOs, in the period April to June 2020, the average days lost per person was 3.14, which is a reduction of 0.22 average days lost per person when compared to the same period in 2019/20 (3.36). This is also the lowest level of absence over the last 3 years.

Average hours lost by month 2019/20 & 2020/21 (April 2020 to June 2020)

For officers, the graph on the strategic dashboard shows that for April, May and June 2020 absence was lower than the same months last year. In addition, the average hours lost in those 3 months are the lowest levels of absence seen in those months over the last 6 years (i.e. April 2020 is lower than April 2019, April 2018, April 2017, April 2016 and April 2015).

For staff, sickness absence is also lower in all 3 months, for the period April to June 2020 when compared to the same months in 2019. For April and May 2020, the average hours lost are the lowest levels of absence in those months over the last 6 years and for June 2020 they are the lowest levels of absence in the last 3 years.

For PCSOs, absence was lower in April and June 2020 when compared to April and June 2019, but May 2020 was higher than the same month last year. The month of June 2020 had the lowest level of absence in this month for the last 5 years and although May 2020 was higher than May 2019 it was lower than May in the 4 years preceding 2019/20.

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 (6.96), Criminal Justice Command (2.43) and ERSOU (2.26), which is the same top 3 as reported last quarter.

For Contact Management, they have the highest average days lost per person and their absence is higher for April to June 2020 (6.96) when compared to April to June 2019 (5.40). This represents an increase of 1.56 average days lost per person.

The reasons for absence accounting for the highest percentage of payroll hours lost in Contact Management are psychological (41.53%) and musculo/skeletal (29.30%). This is the same top two reasons for absence in ERSOU (psychological – 74.41%, musculo/skeletal – 18.49%) but for Criminal Justice Command psychological absence is the highest proportion at 44.16% but nervous system related absence accounts for the second highest proportion of absence (25.28%).

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 1.53 average days lost per person, when compared to the South (1.46) and the West (0.76). However, it should be noted that LPA North have reduced their average days lost per person by 1.20 for April to June 2020, when compared to April to June 2019 (2.73).

Although Strategic Change Performance also has higher average days lost per person (2.42), this command has a smaller average officer headcount and, therefore, any absence experienced has a greater impact on their overall rates.

There have been reductions across most commands for the April to June 2020, when compared to April to June 2019, with the greatest reductions being in Chief Officer and Force Command (5.86 to 0.00) and Local Policing Support Unit (5.41 to 0.18) (12.74 to 9.58).

Staff

For staff, the Commands with the highest average days lost per person, for April to June 2020, are Criminal Justice Command (2.63), Crime and Public Protection (1.90) and Contact Management (1.77).

Criminal Justice Command's average days lost per person is 2.63, which is an increase when compared to last year (2.00). Psychological absence accounts for the highest proportion of absence (59.70%) which is the same main reason as April to June 2019 but an increase of 20.34 percentage points from 39.37%.

Miscellaneous related absences are the second highest proportion, for April to June 2020, at 13.90%; this is an increase from 4.96% for April to June 2019 when miscellaneous related absences was the fifth most common reason for absence.

Crime & Public Protection Command have the second highest average days lost per person of the larger commands (1.90) but this is a reduction when compared to the same period last year (2.42). In relation to reasons for absence, the most common type of absence is similar this year when compared to last with psychological related absences account for the highest proportion (35.19%), which is fairly static when compared to the same period last year (35.59%). Miscellaneous is second with 28.33%, which is a significant increase, from 1.08% for last year.

Contact Management staff absence has reduced by 1.62 average days lost per person for April to June 2020 (1.77) compared to the same period in 2019 (3.39). In relation to absence reasons, psychological related absences account for the highest proportion of absence (35.07%), which is higher than the proportion lost last year (30.98%). Musculo/skeletal related absences account for the next highest proportion of payroll hours lost (15.78%), which is a reduction when compared to the same period last year (18.76%).

As with officers, there are other Commands with high average days lost per person for staff, including Specials Command Team at 11.30, Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU) at 2.86 and Legal Department (1.87), 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 only 3 commands with an increase of average days lost for April to June 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019; Chief Officer and Force Command (from 0.00 to 3.57), Criminal Justice (from 2.00 to 2.63) and Specials Command Team (from 0.00 to 11.30). All other commands are showing reduced absence for April to June 2020 compared to April to June 2019.

PCSOs

For PCSOs, only LPA West is showing an increase in average days lost per person, to 4.88 for April to June 2020 when compared to 2.51 for April to June 2019.

LPA North has seen a reduction of 0.22 average days lost per person from 3.34 for April to June 2019 to 3.12 for the same period in 2020 and LPA South has seen the most significant reduction of 2.84 average days lost per person for the same periods (from 4.16 for April to June 2019 to 1.32 for April to June 2020). 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 April to June 2020 has reduced for all absence terms when compared to April to June 2019. Long term absence has the greatest reduction of 0.44 average days lost (from 1.50 for April to June 2019 to 1.06 for April to June 2020).

For staff, there have also been reduction in all absence terms for the same periods. Short term absence has shown the greatest reduction, from 0.58 average days lost per person to 0.20; medium term has reduced from 0.40 to 0.24 and long term has reduced from 1.38 to 1.23.

For PCSOs there has been a reduction in short and medium term absence, but an increase in long term absence; 2.19 average days lost per person, increasing to 2.43.

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 41.91% for April to June 2019 to 42.75% for April to June 2020. However, when measured as the average number of days lost per person this has reduced from 0.96 to 0.67.

For staff, psychological related absences accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (43.26%), which is an increase of 6.37 percentage points when compared to April to June 2019 (36.89%). However, the average days lost per person has reduced from 0.87 for April to June 2019 to 0.72 for the same period in 2020.

The percentage of payroll hours lost to musculo/skeletal is the second most common reason for absence for officers but has reduced for April to June 2020 when

compared to April to June 2019. Officer absence for musculo/skeletal reasons has reduced from 23.21% to 19.30% and average days lost per person for this reason has reduced from 0.53 to 0.30.

For staff, the second most common reason for absence is for miscellaneous reasons, which includes absence for cancer, post-operative recovery, leukaemia and high temperatures. For April to June 2020 the proportion of payroll hours lost for miscellaneous absence was 17.60%, a 7.68 percentage point increase when compared to April to June 2019 (9.93%). In terms of average days lost per person miscellaneous absence has increased from 0.23 for April to June 2019 to 0.29 for the same period in 2020.

For PCSOs, respiratory absence accounts for the highest percentage of payroll hours lost and has increased from 6.96% for April to June 2019 to 39.72% for April to June 2020. Half of the 8 PCSO absence instances under respiratory were for either confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Psychological related absences accounts for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost and has increased from 16.96% to 26.20% 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 7.64% to 10.86%), nervous system related absence (from 2.87% to 4.59%) and miscellaneous absence (from 5.26% to 6.40%). Apart from musculo skeletal related absence, the absence reason with the highest reduction in percentage of payroll hours lost is digestive absence (reducing from 7.89% to 5.28%).

For staff, the percentage of payroll hours lost for other absence reasons have fluctuated in April to June 2020 when compared to April to June 2019. Apart from miscellaneous and psychological absence, cardiac / circulatory absence has seen the greatest increase in the proportion of payroll hours lost (increasing from 2.39% to 5.55%). The greatest reduction in the proportion of payroll hours lost for April to June 2020 is for musculo skeletal related absence (reducing from 16.90% to 10.06%) followed by digestive related absence (reducing from 9.64% to 5.73% and then genito urinary (reducing from 5.45% to 2.92%).

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

Performance Improvement Unit (PIU)

Structural changes introduce a Chief Inspector who will take over the day to day running of PIU and provide an opportunity for development of new themes of work, maintaining the successes achieved for attendance, and examining more performance related issues. This should enhance the impact of the PIU and provide a richer picture in terms of leadership and culture, and the affect that has on attendance and performance.

Regarding recent absence, the impact of lockdown related to Covid-19 has a clear correlation with a reduction in sickness, particularly short-term absence; although there has been a small but constant increase in short term absence in recent weeks. As restrictions are eased, PIU will work with HR to monitor sickness rates and explore where ongoing upward trends in sickness persist, and what may be triggering this.

Operational HR

The picture for police staff absence shows a decreasing trend; this has predominantly been seen in short to medium term cases.

So, as a result of this, the Operational HR team have been able to undertake a detailed peer review into long term absence cases including a review of the capability interventions and return to work initiatives. The long-term cases are the most difficult to influence as they often involve complex medical conditions and treatment.

This review was undertaken during June 2020 with data from end May 2020; with 47 cases. Of these cases 19% had returned during the review period, 19% were imminently due to return to work. The remaining 62% of staff were thoroughly reviewed with considerations for additional Occupational Health and Welfare support and interventions.

In relation PCSO absence, due to the low overall headcount, small numbers of long-term absence cases can have a significant impact on the overall position. For example, whilst 3 individuals who were long term absent in April and parts of May did return to the workplace, there were still 3 individuals who, as at 31st May 2020 remained long term absence. It is for this reason that May 2020 had a higher average day lost per person when compared May 2019. All PCSO absence has been reviewed by the Operational HR team; one individual has returned to work; one case is subject to a medical redeployment hearing in the coming weeks and another is a confirmed Covid-19 case and the command is locally supporting this PCSO back to work.

Adjusted / Recuperative

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative, adjusted and restricted duties has reduced from 404 as at 31st March 2020 to 366 as at 30th June 2020.

The number of staff on recuperative or restricted duties has reduced by 27 from 100 to 73 and PCSOs have reduced by 1 from 8 to 7 for the same periods.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

Not applicable

6.1 Links to Police and Crime Plan Priorities

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.

Essex Police, despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, have been able to adapt their processes to ensure that recruitment has been able to continue at the start of the 2020/21 financial year. In addition, a higher number of officers have re-joined or transferred in from other forces this financial year to date when compared to the same period last year.

The representation of BAME officers increased significantly in 2019/20 which, as a result, represented the highest proportion of BAME officers in force over the last 6 years. This position has been strengthened further, albeit marginally, from 3.17% as at 31st March 2020 to 3.22% as at 30th June 2020.

The Special Constabulary headcount has remained relatively stable at the start of the financial year. Total duty hours worked for the period April to June 2020 increased to 61,269 compared to 51,961 for the same period last year with the average hours worked per person also increasing from 33.67 to 39.91.

The total duty hours worked of 61,629 is an average of 20,876 a month. This is the equivalent of, on average, 1305 specials working 16 hours a month (an increase when compared to the same period last year where this figure stood at 1082).

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.
- Senior Interviews and other interviews and assessment processes are continuing, where viable using a virtual platform.
- The College of Policing online assessment centre went live for Essex Police on 10th June, following the cancellation of the SEARCH process in March 2020. Essex Police secured status as an early adopter force and put forward 346 candidates for assessment. The results are due to be with for Force week commencing 6th July 2020.

- Clearances are currently continuing to be progressed with virtual options, self-declarations or policy decisions in relation to risk assessing each element of the process. In the specific areas of medical, fitness, biometrics, CTC vetting and references, clear guidance and policy decisions have been provided to ensure consistency of practice and every effort is being made to obtain the necessary clearances prior to job offers being made.
- 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

Not applicable

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.

Expected Outcome: Recruitment campaigns and increased intakes are scheduled throughout the year to increase current numbers. As reported to the Performance and Resources Board on 25th June it is expected, due to attrition and especially resignations to join as regular officers, that special constabulary growth will be challenging with a steady increase throughout 2020/21.

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

Expected Outcome: following the increase seen in 2019/20, the early progress made at the start of 2020/21 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 Operational HR team are currently reviewing training tools and intranet guidance to continue to support supervisors and line managers in the management of absence. Scoping is being undertaken to develop a series of 'bite size' podcasts on key aspects of attendance management.

Health and Wellbeing Services

The Feel Well Live Well is currently suspended due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Prior to the cessation, a total of 839 individuals have attended the full programme since its inception in 2015 with a further 533 people having attended either a Feel Well Live Well Refresher or Taster session. The Feel Well Live Well for Leaders programme had attracted 127 leaders to the programmes prior to the suspension of the sessions.

A Covid-19 Wellbeing Steering Group was introduced as the Coronavirus restrictions commenced with the aim to ensure the wellbeing response matched the organisational need, with representation from Federation, Unison, Superintendents Association, HR, and Diversity and Inclusion to subsequently feed into the support groups.

The current position has also provided a unique marketing opportunity through both the Chief Constable's communications, Gold updates and specific Chief Officer spot-light articles. The staff associations and support groups have also promoted the events through their communication channels, thus uptake in events has exceeded initial expectation and hopes.

The live, on-line interactive wellbeing sessions topics include:

- Wellbeing whilst working from home
- Health Anxiety/ Combatting Anxiety
- Leadership Wellbeing
- Mindfulness and Relaxation
- Boosting Help Seeking Behaviour in a Policing Environment
- Sleep & Nutrition
- Returning to work following absence / Resocialisation
- Trauma in a policing environment
- Gratitude

New sessions are continually being developed and added to the library of sessions and include Wellbeing and Sleep, Fitness for the Mind and Body, Managing Uncertainty and Nutrition.

The 31 live, virtual sessions that have taken place have attracted 1005 colleagues dialling in remotely across Essex and Kent. Positive feedback has been received from staff associations and all attendees.

An addition to the sessions is the introduction of a jabber chat room which accompanies the live sessions which delegates can opt to join if they wish to do so. Conversations are generated throughout the inputs, not just with the course leaders but with each other and knowledge sharing has taken place and delegates are also encouraged to register their consent for future communications, information and upcoming session topics and dates to encourage further interaction and attention to their own wellbeing.

As these sessions are collaborative with Kent Police, the team are able to effectively double capacity and therefore between two and three sessions per week are being delivered in this format. These sessions also allow delegates to attend with their cameras on or via audio only and therefore it is hoped this will also encourage those who have not previously engaged with the services an opportunity to find value in the initiatives being developed by the wellbeing team.

This delivery and engagement format will continue following the Covid-19 period due to the positive response, large numbers and reduction in abstraction costs of officers and staff to attend the sessions. It is anticipated that when these sessions move from jabber to Teams, more operational officers may be able to engage, as access will be available through handheld devices and will no longer be limited to those with access to a network terminal/ laptop.

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.

In the first quarter of usage, a total of 366 hits were received on the portal, with 51 calls made to the support line. Counselling calls accounted for 90.2% of the calls received with anxiety being the most common reason, followed by individual event and service enquiry calls. Of the advice calls received, the highest reason was for civil matters at 60% of this engagement.

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 (EPC). Due to Covid-19, the scheduled monthly movement to locations across Essex has not taken place, and the kiosk remains accessible at EPC at this time.

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 also provides extensive signposting dependant on personal results.

Overall, a wide range of wellbeing activity continues to be delivered within the restrictions of the Coronavirus pandemic and demonstrable numbers of staff and officers accessing these innovative solutions.