

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2021

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

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<b>Chief Officer</b>	<b>Mr Richard Leicester</b>
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<b>Author on behalf of Chief Officer:</b>	<b>Mr Adam Pfeiffer</b>
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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 full time equivalent (fte), turnover and diversity profiles.

#### 2.0 **Recommendations**

Not applicable.

#### 3.0 **Executive Summary**

Each section contained within the HR strategic dashboard is summarised under section 5.0 below.

#### 4.0 **Introduction/Background**

This commentary report provides context for the information contained within the HR strategic dashboard and summarises the key highlights from each section. The data has been taken from the force HR system (SAP) as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, 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 the last HR data pack, as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

It should be noted that following a review of the HR report between the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Human Resources, the report for this quarter contains the following new additions:

- Details on the number of staff business cases since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020.
- Absence figures have been represented as average days lost per person. Statistics on the proportion of payroll hours lost against the contracted hours available have been included.
- An additional section has been included which details the wider declaration of protected characteristics of the workforce.

The report highlights a number of areas that remain on track or have improved;

- The force has continued to attract and recruit new officers into the force and is on track to exceed the national uplift requirement by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.
- Reductions in officer and staff vacancies have been highlighted across a number of commands.
- Strong police officer application numbers overall, specifically with regards to officers who declare themselves as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME).
- The force has the highest proportion of BAME officers over the last 6 years.
- Significant reduction in officer and staff turnover have been achieved.
- Significant reduction in officer absence across all absence terms has been achieved.
- Significant reduction in staff absence, specifically psychological and respiratory.
- Reduction in officer and staff average days lost per person to sickness across the majority of general absence reasons.
- Improved self-declaration of protected characteristics by the workforce when compared to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 in a number of key areas.

Lastly, the report also identifies areas of focus along with relevant context and activity in place to enhance the position ahead. For note, the main areas of focus relate to continuing to seek to increase the proportion of female officer applications (albeit the overall female headcount of applications is improved) and a need to continue to monitor PCSO absence given an increase in this area. The report also highlights key areas by command where vacancies have increased or where there has been an increase in localised absence.

## **5.0 Current Work and Performance**

### **Officers**

#### **Establishment v Strength and Vacancies**

The officer strength fte, as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 was 3366.72 fte, which is 2.28 fte under the establishment of 3369.00 and this is a net increase of 51.17 fte since the last HR report as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

With regards to the vacancy percentage of each Command (which can be found on the second tab of the HR Strategic Dashboard), there has been positive reductions in several Commands. These include the HQ Directorate, Local Policing Support Unit, Operational Policing Command, Strategic Change and Performance and the Support Services Directorate.

The only exception to report is the Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) vacancy rate, which has increased from 11.86% to 16.11%. This is primarily due to the increase of 6.00 fte Serious Organised Crime Unit Investigation DC growth posts, which have been added to the establishment. Officers have been selected for all 6 posts. 1 officer is due start on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 and a further 5 have been agreed subject to vetting (2 proposed to start on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021, 1 on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and 2 on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021).

Other vacancies of note within SCD are in the roles of Covert Surveillance DC (6.20 fte), MIT DC (5.40 fte), Volume Fraud Team DC (4.11 fte), Fraud Investigator DC (4.00 fte), Intel Bureau Policing Support Team (3.00 fte), Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking DC (2.20 fte) and Cyber Crime Unit DC (2.00 fte). Of the 26.91 fte vacancies listed, 12.00 fte individuals have been selected, with officers either awaiting release dates or due to join subject to completion of relevant training. There are 2.00 fte posts temporarily on hold to fund a Detective Sergeant position and the remaining vacancies are at various stages of the recruitment process.

### **Recruitment Joiners and Applications**

So far this financial year to date, a total of 237 officers have joined the force, of which 206 joined through the standard police constable entry route, 10 re-joined/returned and 21 transferred in from other forces. There is one remaining intake this financial year, which is due in March 2021. This intake has recently been approved to increase to an intake of 60.00fte, which is projected to leave the force approximately 40.00 fte over establishment as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The following table shows the application numbers for the latest rolling year, last 8-week period and last 4-week period:

Reporting Period	Total	BAME No/%	Female No/%
Rolling Year (w/c 27/01/20 - 25/01/21)	3361	432 / 12.85%	1193 / 35.50%
Last 8 Weeks (w/c 07/12/20 - 25/01/21)	436	74 / 16.97%	127 / 29.13%
Last 4 Weeks (w/c 04/01/21 - 25/01/21)	293	45 / 15.36%	81 / 27.65%

Application numbers remain strong, which is evidenced by the latest 4-week period. The lowest weekly applications for the latest 4-week period was for the week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This is however, the same as the highest number of applications in any week in January 2020.

The proportion of applications from BAME candidates remains strong with 45 out of 293 for the 4-week period, this equates to 15.36% of the total number of applications and is significantly higher than the economically active population of the county (6.56%). Whilst the proportion of female applications has reduced the actual monthly average for November 2020 to January 2021 was 89, which is higher when compared to the same period last year (62 for November 2019 to January 2020). To ensure the attraction of female candidates remains strong, the channel plan for quarter 4 (as part of the #WeValueDifference campaign) focuses heavily on attracting females, through social media and television.

**Turnover**

There has been a reduction in officer turnover measured both as headcount and as a proportion of total leavers for the period April 2020 to January 2021 when compared to April 2019 to January 2020. Turnover has reduced from 6.79% (218 headcount) to 4.96% (169 headcount). This is a headcount reduction of 49 individuals and a percentage point reduction of 1.83.

**Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Gender**

Of the 206 new recruits that have joined during the current financial year to date, 18 (8.74%) were BAME. Of the 31 officers that either re-joined or transferred into Force, 3 (9.68%) were BAME. Therefore, a total of 237 officers have joined the force, of which 21 (8.86%) were BAME. For information the below table demonstrates the proportion of BAME officers that have joined (all entry routes) by ethnicity grouping.

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>H'Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Asian/Asian British	7	33.33
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	5	23.81
Mixed/Multiple ethnic Groups	7	33.33
Other Ethnic Group	2	9.52
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The representation of BAME officers in the workforce has increased to a headcount of 124 (3.60%) as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 from 116 / 3.42% as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. This demonstrates the highest proportion of BAME officers in the force over the last 6 years.

With regards to applications, as at 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 129 BAME candidates were in process, which represented 10.86% of the 1188 total candidates in process. This demonstrates a likely strong position for future intakes.

Data provided by the national uplift team demonstrates the positive position the force is in with regards to BAME recruitment. Statistics show that if the force only recruited each officer intake in line with the BAME population proportion (6.56%) then it is projected that the force would have a BAME proportion of 4.2% by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. However, based on current activity, it is projected that if activity continues at the same trajectory then this could be as high as 4.8%.

With regards to gender, of the 206 new recruits that have joined during the current financial year to date, 75 (36.41%) were female. Of the other 31 that either re-joined or transferred in, 7 (2.95%) were female. Therefore, a total of 237 officers have joined the force, of which 82 (34.60%) were female. This is marginally higher than the current force position of 34.33% as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. It is worth noting that the force position has increased by 0.37 percentage points from the position last reported as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (33.96%). This also represents the highest proportion of female officers over the last 6 years.

Whilst the proportion of recent applications has been lower, overall, there are currently 418 female candidates in progress which equates to 35.19% of all applications. This is also higher than the current force position of 34.60%.

**National Uplift Gender Position**

The latest national uplift statistics project that based on current activity the female officer position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 is likely to be approximately 34.7%. Whilst this would represent an increase, it is still lower than the national female population of 51.0%. However, as previously stated the forces' current proportion of female officers has continued to increase and is currently at the highest level over the last 6 years.

**Absence**

The average days lost per officer for the period April 2020 to January 2021 has reduced from 7.78 to 5.54 average days (a reduction of 2.24 average days per person). This represents the lowest level of absence for this period over the last 6 years. The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the percentage of available contracted hours lost for the period April to February 2021 compared to the same period last year:

Employee Group	Apr - Jan 2019/20		Apr - Jan 2020/21		Variance	
	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost
Police	199584.04	7.23%	151062.69	5.13%	-48521.35	-2.10%

The figures demonstrate that for the period April 2020 to 31 Jan 2021, 5.13% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness which is a significant reduction when compared to the same period last year (7.23%). This is a reduction of 48,521.35 payroll hours.

With regards to absence terms, there has been a marginal increase in the average days lost per person for medium term absence (0.90 increasing to 0.94), however there have been significant reductions in short term and long-term absence, which contribute to the overall improved picture. Psychological related absences continue to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (40.01%). It should however be noted that, when measured as average days lost per person this has reduced significantly from 3.08 average days lost for the period April 2019 to January 2020, to

2.21 average days lost for the same period this year. Similarly, musculo/skeletal related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (14.14%). The average days lost per person for this reason has however reduced by more than half from 1.59 average days lost to 0.78 average days lost.

Across the 12 general sickness reasons, for the same reporting periods, there have been reductions in the average days lost per person for 9 reasons, with 1 remaining static and 2 increasing. Skin related absences have increased from 0.01 to 0.07 average days lost per person, however this absence reason only accounts for 1.30% of total payroll hours lost. The other absence reason that has increased is miscellaneous, from 0.39 average days lost per person to 0.48 average days lost. The reason for this is due to a significant increase in the number of payroll hours due to post-operative recovery (2543 hours increasing to 7129 hours) and an increase in the number of payroll hours lost to cancer (543 hours increasing to 2272 hours). In many cases these absences cannot easily be influenced by the force.

With regards to Command analysis only 2 have increased when compared to the same period last year, both of which are fairly small increases. Criminal Justice Command have increased from 10.71 average days lost per person to 10.84 and Support Services Directorate have increased from 3.93 average days lost to 4.91 average days lost. With regards to Criminal Justice, the main reason for this is due to an increase in psychological related absences, specifically two officers who have been off for a combined total of 2495 payroll hours. However, it should be noted that both officers have since returned to work (at the beginning of January 2021). With regards to Support Services the increase can be attributed to a long-term skin related sickness and long-term instance of cardiac/circulatory related sickness.

Contact Management and the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) have the highest average days lost per person, however both have reduced significantly when compared to the same period last year. Contact Management reducing from 19.81 average days lost to 15.69 average days lost and ERSOU reducing to 11.34 average days lost from 8.11 average days lost. Of the three Local Policing Areas (LPAs) the North have the highest average days lost per person with 5.63 average days lost. This is however a significant reduction when compared to the same position last year (9.04 average days lost per person) and represents the highest reduction of absence across the three LPAs. With regards to the North LPA, psychological related absences accounts for the highest proportion of absence (35.33%) followed by musculo/skeletal (15.59%), which is consistent with the wider force position.

### **Adjusted and Recuperative Duties**

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative and adjusted duties has reduced from 386 as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to 362 as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

### **Police Staff & Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)**

#### **Establishment v Strength and Vacancies**

The police staff strength as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 was 2095.52 fte, which is 191.47 fte under the establishment of 2286.99 fte and equates to a vacancy rate of 8.37%. This is a significant improvement compared to the last HR data pack, as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, where the number of vacancies were 221.93 fte (9.70% vacancy rate).

Of the 14 Commands listed on the 'Est v Str tab' of the HR Strategic Dashboard, 10 have a lower vacancy rate as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 when compared to the last HR data pack as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and 1 has remained static. Of the other 3 Commands, Legal Department and LPA West have increased, however they only have 1.11 fte and 1.00 fte vacancies respectively. Contact Management is the only exception to report and their vacancy rate has increased from 2.76% to 4.94%. The main reason for this is due to an increase in PNC Support Officer vacancies (increasing to 8.44 fte), however, this is projected to reduce as there are currently 6 candidates in pre-employment checks.

The PCSO strength as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 was 101.41 fte, which is 3.59 fte under the establishment of 105.00. It should be noted that the PCSO establishment is reducing to 103.00, which is due to the withdrawal of external funding and will result in the PCSO vacancies reducing to 1.59 fte. Human Resources, Learning Development and Corporate Finance are working together to determine the optimum time for the next PCSO intake, based on attrition data and minimum course sizes. It is anticipated the intake will be in quarter 2 of 2021/22 (July 2021 to September 2021). This will be finalised over the next few weeks.

### **Turnover**

Staff turnover has reduced from 7.37% (headcount of 164) to 6.78% (headcount of 155). PCSO turnover has increased from 6.03% to 6.96%, but on a headcount basis this is only an increase of 1 (from 7 to 8).

### **Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Gender**

The proportion of BAME staff has increased from 4.09% (93) as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 to 4.39% (101) as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. With regards to gender, the proportion of female staff has increased from 64.98% (headcount of 1477) to 65.22% (headcount of 1502).

With regards to PCSOs, the last HR data summary reported that BAME PCSOs had reduced from 3 to 2. Latest figures show that this reduced again to a headcount of 1 BAME PCSO (0.91%). However, it should be noted that both PCSOs left to join Essex Police as new officer recruits and as such have progressed their careers.

The female PCSO headcount has remained static at 64, but due to a lower overall PCSO headcount the proportion has increased from 56.64 to 58.18%.

### **Absence**

With regards to the staff sickness absence (for the period April 2020 to January 2021), the average days lost per person has reduced to 5.93 average days lost from 8.60 average days lost for the same period last year (a reduction of 2.67 average days per person). This represents the lowest level of absence for this period over the last 6 years.

The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the percentage of available contracted hours lost for the period April 2020 to 31 January 2021 compared to the same period last year:

Employee Group	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost
Staff	141573.93	8.58%	100290.11	5.91%	-41283.81	-2.68%

The figures demonstrate that for the period April 2020 to 31 January 2021, 5.91% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness which is a significant reduction when compared to the same period last year (8.58%). This represents a reduction of 41,283.81 payroll hours.

With regards to absence terms, there has been a reduction in short term, medium term and long-term absence for staff.

For staff, psychological related absence continues to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (36.51%), however the average days lost per person to this absence reason has reduced significantly from 2.73 average days lost to 2.16 average days lost. Respiratory related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (14.17%), however, as with psychological related absences the average days lost per person to this absence has reduced (from 1.00 average days lost to 0.84 average days lost).

Of the 12 general absence reasons, the average days lost per person has reduced in 10 of them for the period April 2020 to January 2021, when compared to the same period last year, and one has remained static (skin related absences). The only absence reason to increase is cardiac/circulatory (from 0.21 average days lost to 0.34 average days lost). The main reason for this is due to a significant increase in post-operative recovery (626 hours increasing to 1480) and one period of long-term thrombosis absence (equating to 1485 payroll hours). There has also been an increase in payroll hours lost to stroke and chest pains.

Of the 16 Commands, all but two have lower average days lost per person for April 2020 to January 2021, when compared to the same period last year. The Legal department and Specials Command Team have recorded a higher average number of days lost per person, however, they only have an average headcount for the period, of 7 and 3 respectively, so the absences relate to a very small number of individuals. Criminal Justice Command have the highest average days lost per person (8.26), however this is lower than the same period last year (8.76 average days lost). Contact Management have the second highest absence (7.02 average days lost), however this is significantly lower than the same period last year (12.25 average days lost).

For PCSOs the average days lost per person is 10.98 which is 1.62 average days per person higher than the same period last year (9.36 average days).



The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the percentage of available contracted hours lost for the period April 2020 to 31 January 2021 compared to the same period last year.

Employee Group	Apr - Jan 2019/20		Apr - Jan 2020/21		Variance	
	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost
PCSO	8030.76	9.14%	9300.90	10.72%	1270.14	1.58%

The figures demonstrate that for the period April 2020 to 31 January 2021, 10.72% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness which is an increased reduction when compared to the same period last year (9.14%). This is an increase of 1270.14 payroll hours.

Whilst not the sole reason, this increase can, in part, be attributed to long term absence (specifically 3 long term cases). Of the 3 long term cases, two are recovering from significant surgery and one is due to psychological absence linked to Covid-19.

For PCSOs, musculo/skeletal accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (33.07%), followed by psychological (25.48%) and both have increased in terms of average days lost per person, which is linked to the reason cited in the previous paragraph.

### **Recuperative Duties**

The number of staff on recuperative duties has reduced significantly from 81 to 65 and PCSOs have remained the same at 4.

### **Business Case Information**

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, 2 police staff left Essex Police on the grounds of redundancy on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.

In total, over this period, five business cases closed:

- **Chelmsford Police Station refurbishment** – 217 members of staff were affected; no selection processes were required, some staff will return to Chelmsford Police Station on completion of the refurbishment along with additional staff being relocated to Chelmsford Police Station, there are no redundancies anticipated from this business case.
- **Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU) restructure** - 12 members of staff affected with 2 members of staff leaving Essex Police on the grounds of redundancy on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020 and one member of staff has been successfully redeployed into an alternative role.

- **LPSU / Citizens in Policing** - second business case to reduce number of roles by 3. Two of the roles are vacant, 1 member of staff is subject of potential redundancy if a suitable alternative cannot be identified by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- **OPC Contingency Planning** - creation of resilience team; this business case resulted in 5 staff for 4 posts; 2 members of staff secured promotions via selection processes, the remaining staff were directly slotted into the same grade of post, therefore no selection process and no redundancies.
- **Criminal Justice and PNC restructure business case** - 69 staff were affected, 2 staff were successfully redeployed into alternative roles, one in November 2020 and one in early January 2021. No selection process for the remaining 67 staff retained in post.

One business case closed in January 2021:

- **EPSA** - Consultation launched 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020; Consultation closed 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. A total of 2 police staff impacted – potential reduction of 1 member of staff, however 1 member of staff has requested voluntary redundancy, this request is still being considered pending figures from payroll.

Two business cases launched in January 2021:

- **Essex Corporate Finance** - Consultation launch 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021; Proposal to restructure Corporate Accounting; 3 police staff impacted by proposals, if proposal is ratified there is the potential of at least one redundancy. Consultation closes 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- **Essex Estates** - Consultation launched 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Proposal to restructure, promotional opportunity which would reduce the risk of the potential reduction in staff. Consultation closes 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

## **Specials**

### **Headcount and Duty Hours**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, there were 519 specials in post on SAP. In the previous update it was reported that although there were 524 specials in post, there were 23 leavers due to be processed taking the total down to 501. Therefore, the current figure of 519 represents an increase of 18 when compared to the last position reported.

The total duty hours worked for the period April 2020 to January 2021 increased to 176,681 compared to 163,474 for the same period last year, with the average hours worked per person also increasing from 31.87 to 34.79.

The total duty hours worked in January 2021 was 17,773 which is the equivalent of 1111 specials working a 16-hour month.

### **Recruitment and Applications**

During this financial year to date (April 2020 to January 2021), 120 specials have joined, which is 53 more since the last HR data pack up to September 2020.

Application numbers remain strong and there are currently 3 more training courses scheduled for the remainder of 2020/21 that can accommodate up to 48 new specials.

### Turnover

Specials turnover has reduced from 25.43% (headcount of 133) to 19.04% (headcount of 99).

### Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) & Gender

The proportion of BAME specials has increased marginally from 6.87% (36) to 7.51% (39). With regards to gender, whilst the proportion of female specials has increased marginally from 31.68% to 31.79%, the headcount has reduced by 1 from 166 to 165.

### All Employee Groups Diversity Data

The following table provides a breakdown of the protected characteristics data for officers, staff, PCSOs and specials as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. This data has been compared against March 2016 to demonstrate how the position has changed over the last 5 years:

Diversity Category	Employee Group	Summary - 31st December 2020	Position as at 31/03/16	31/12/20 v 31/03/16 Variance
Gender (self-declared)	Officers	0.06% (2) have declared as transgender	0.10%	-0.04%
	Staff	0.00% (0) have declared as transgender	0.05%	-0.05%
	PCSOs	0.91% (1) have declared as transgender	0.00%	0.91%
	Specials	0.00% (0) have declared as transgender	0.27%	-0.27%
Religion	Officers	19.65% (668) have declared a religion	13.55%	6.01%
	Staff	25.12% (571) have declared a religion	18.56%	6.57%
	PCSOs	23.64% (26) have declared a religion	15.68%	7.96%
	Specials	29.25% (158) have declared a religion	12.63%	16.68%
Sexuality	Officers	3.46% (118) declared as bisexual/gay/lesbian	1.54%	1.92%
	Staff	2.42% (55) declared as bisexual/gay/lesbian	1.19%	1.23%
	PCSOs	3.64% (4) declared as bisexual/gay/lesbian	2.97%	0.67%
	Specials	4.59% (24) declared as bisexual/gay/lesbian	2.42%	2.18%
Disability	Officers	3.98% (136) have declared as disabled	3.92%	0.07%
	Staff	7.35% (167) have declared as disabled	6.73%	0.62%
	PCSOs	7.27% (8) have declared as disabled	5.08%	2.19%
	Specials	0.38% (2) have declared as disabled	0.00%	0.38%
Nationality	Officers	0.85% (29) have declared not British	0.44%	0.41%
	Staff	1.67% (38) have declared not British	1.14%	0.53%
	PCSOs	0.00% (0) have declared not British	0.00%	0.00%
	Specials	4.21% (22) have declared not British	1.88%	2.33%
Marital Status	Officers	37.57% (1283) married or in civil partnership	55.52%	-17.95%
	Staff	41.75% (949) married or in civil partnership	51.66%	-9.91%
	PCSOs	53.64% (59) married or in civil partnership	54.66%	-1.02%
	Specials	8.41% (44) married or in civil partnership	22.85%	-14.42%
Age	Officers:	18-24: 11.98% 25-39: 50.28% 40-54: 36.16% 55+: 1.58%		
	Staff	18-24: 5.02% 25-39: 33.44% 40-54: 35.24% 55+: 26.31%		
	PCSOs	18-24: 2.73% 25-39: 30.00% 40-54: 44.55% 55+: 22.73%		
	Specials	18-24: 28.68% 25-39: 46.46% 40-54: 19.69% 55+: 5.16%		

The figures demonstrate that with the exception of marital status and the proportion of officers, staff and specials that have declared as transgender, there has been a positive increase in the proportion of officers, staff, PCSOs and specials declaring protected characteristics.

## **6.0 Implications (Issues)**

The areas of focus have been detailed throughout the document and actions for improvement are provided at section 8.0.

### **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.

Essex Police, despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, have been able to adapt their processes to ensure that recruitment has been able to continue throughout the financial year and are on track to achieve the required establishment by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. With the recent approval to recruit up to 60 officers in March 2021, this will put the force in a strong position for the start of the 2021/22 financial year and assist in successfully achieving the 2021/22 uplift requirements.

The representation of BAME officers continues to increase and the current proportion of 3.60% represents the highest proportion over the last 6 years. 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.

The special constabulary continue to contribute a significant number of hours to policing with the latest month (January 2021) at 17,773 which is the equivalent of 1111 specials working a 16-hour month.

### **6.2 Demand**

Human Resources were provided with growth posts across a number of departments in 2020/21 to ensure the increased demand on Human Resources services was managed. In total, Human Resources were allocated a total of 28.00 support growth posts (17.00 Learning & Development, 2.50 Health Services, 4.50 HR Resourcing and 1.00 Operational HR). All except one of these posts has been selected for.

### **6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

The current situation regarding COVID-19 continues to create a significant risk for the recruitment of all roles, however intakes remain a focus to enable resources to join 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.

- Clearances and selection processes 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.
- Female representation across the force is being managed through the 'We Value Difference' campaign and associated outreach.

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

Since the last report the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2020-2025 was launched on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

The Chief Constable chairs the Corporate Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Board, which is now complemented by the 12 local boards that have been established. All local boards are completing action planning templates designed to further enhance the objectives of the aforementioned strategy. In addition, the Diversity and Inclusion team attend Equality, Diversity and Inclusion meetings held by partner agencies as part of the rollout of the strategy.

To further evidence Essex Police's commitment to embed the principles of the strategy in all that it does, the force is looking to implement mandatory training which is anticipated to be in place by the summer of 2021.

#### **6.5 Health and Safety Implications**

Not applicable

#### **7.0 Consultation/Engagement**

Operational Human Resources  
Special Constabulary

#### **8.0 Actions for Improvement**

Whilst the numbers of female officers are increasing, the proportion of officer applications has reduced, therefore the Positive Action team will continue to focus on this area. As stated in the report, to ensure attraction of female candidates remains strong, the channel plan for quarter 4 as part of the #WeValueDifference campaign focuses heavily on attracting females through social media and television and associated imagery and storytelling. This is supported by recruitment packs and leaflets 400 supermarkets and essential shops to ensure an 'out of home' presence during the COVID pandemic.

To further support change, the HR Positive Action team will continue to focus on two workstreams namely; 'Attraction and Recruitment' and 'Retention and Progression'. A programme of work continues to be undertaken including engagement with

Community Safety Engagement Officers, Local Policing Support Units, and various volunteer networks to promote the Positive Action team and recruitment opportunities. New starters are routinely surveyed to feedback views on the marketing, selection and onboarding process to aid learning. The force has recently participated in the Home Office Discovery event to attract females into the organisation as part a national series of events.

As identified in the report, there has been positive progress with regards to declarations of protected characteristics over the last 5 years. Looking forward, the force is currently in the process of implementing the agreed national standardised workforce diversity categories across the various systems that are in use, such as SAP and Success Factors. The agreed data set was formulated by the College of Policing, Home Office and in consultation with the Disable Police Association, National Police Autism Association, Stonewall and a number of other staff support associations. The agreed national standardised workforce data set will act as the framework for NPCC Workforce, DEI Communities and Police Uplift Programme to develop a route map for forces to move to reporting against this national data set across all HR and recruitment systems. The Diversity and Inclusion Team are currently working on a communications plan with relevant changes being implemented by 31st March 2021. The information provided will enable the force to gain a clear picture of our workforce which will help with the planning of recruitment activities and support structures.

Whilst officer absence has significantly improved, the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) will continue to work closely with Command teams of those areas with high absence with activities such as bi-weekly and monthly Attendance Management Meetings. As stated in the report, officer absence within Criminal Justice is one of the outliers. Long-term absence remains the focus within this department and, where required, intervention from the PIU around compliance and support will continue.

With regards to PCSO absence, the report has highlighted that the increase is predominately linked to 3 long-term cases all of which are being managed. It should be noted that the overall PCSO headcount is low therefore a low number of long-term absences can significantly impact the position. However, as part of the Absence Management Group process, HR Advisers will continue to engage with the Commands to further review return to work options and, if required, capability considerations to help improve the position.

The Operational HR team have commenced quality assurance reviews on various absence interventions. This has included HR Partner reviews of AMG meetings, HR Adviser and HR Partner peer reviews of long-term absence cases and 'health checks' of Commands to look at key indicators such as outstanding fit notes, contacts whilst absent, return to work interviews and compliance with Attendance Support Meetings. This work aims to support commands to share best practice and to ensure they are effectively utilising the tools available to them.

## **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:** As previously reported to the Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board it is expected, due to attrition and especially resignations to join as regular officers, special constabulary growth will be challenging. However, with recruitment campaigns and increased intakes scheduled for the remainder of the year and classroom sizes increasing from 10 to 16, it is projected the numbers could increase marginally to 525 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, with further increases throughout 2021/22.

2. Continue to increase BAME officer representation throughout 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**Expected Outcome:** As reported, the current proportion of BAME officers is the highest level it has been over the last 6 years. The remaining intake of the financial year is scheduled for March 2021, whereby up to 6 BAME officers could join, which would represent 10.00% of the intake.

3. Continue to increase female officer representation throughout 2020/21 and 2021/22.

**Expected Outcome:** With the Positive Action team in place and the quarter 4 marketing campaign that focuses heavily on attracting females it is projected this position will continue to improve.