



Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Annual Report 2020/21

This report sets out the steps taken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex during 2020/21 in pursuit of their statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 to:

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

The protected characteristics are:

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

Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020

At the beginning of the 2020-2021 financial year, the PFCC developed a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy following a comprehensive development process. This included consultation and engagement with a range of communities from across Essex.

The strategy sets out the long-term ambition for the PFCC and the positive impact they aim to have on promoting equality within our society and specifically how they will deliver on the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out above.

The strategy sets out four Equality Diversity and Inclusion Objectives, listed below, to focus the effort of the PFCC's office on delivering change.

These objectives will be reviewed once every two years, or before if necessary, and be reported on annually. The progress made against these objectives will be published on the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's website <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/>

Governance

- Scrutinise the work of Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) against their obligations in the Equality Act 2010 and their own equality objectives. In the case of ECFRS, this will also include performance against the Equality Framework for Fire and Rescue Services and in the case of Essex Police this will include a focus on Stop and Search activity.
 - Through our Performance and Resource Boards undertake quarterly in-depth scrutiny sessions of the performance of both services and how they are delivering against their Public Sector Equality Duty. Ensure that the notes from these are published on the PFCC website and are accessible to the public.

Engagement

- Improve our understanding and connection with communities so everyone has equal opportunity to express their views on policing and fire and rescue services in Essex.
 - By June each year publish an engagement plan that identifies the different communities within Essex, setting out how we will reach out to them through our engagement programme. This Plan will be published along with a full list of all public engagement activity.
 - Develop and deliver engagement programmes that provide the opportunity for all people across Essex to provide their input in key strategic documents, including the Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan, with a particular focus on engagement with young people and people from BAME communities.

Decision Making

- Ensure that key strategic decisions consider the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and provide clear evidence of what has been considered and contributed to the final decision and where necessary undertake a full Equality Impact Assessment.
 - All decision sheets that set out the basis for decisions taken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will consider the three aims and how the decision contributes to achieving them; the people the decision will affect, and whether this effect will disproportionately impact any group with a protected characteristic.
 - Where a disproportionate impact is identified, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed.

Service delivery

- Monitor the effectiveness of our commissioned services in reaching all protected groups and how they are proactively supporting the three objectives within the Equality Act 2010.
 - Report on how commissioned services are delivering against the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Where necessary incorporate these reporting requirements into the contract for the service either by altering the contract part way through or incorporating into the next scheduled renewal of the contract.

Governance, scrutiny and transparency

Throughout 2020/21, the PFCC has continued to exercise oversight of Essex Police's progress in delivering the seven priorities of the Police and Crime Plan (this Plan was extended in 2020 to take account of the delayed PFCC elections due to the COVID 19 pandemic). The Plan includes commitments to breaking the cycle of domestic violence; tackling gangs and serious violence; disrupting and preventing organised crime, and protecting children and vulnerable people from harm. The PFCC has also specifically exercised oversight of the development of the force's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy which came to boards at various stages of development throughout the year. It was launched on 30th November 2020. The PFCC also participated in an independent peer review of the Strategy and its implementation undertaken by the College of Policing.

The PFCC's Performance and Resources Board has also continued to receive quarterly HR reports detailing the force's attendance and sickness levels and the reasons for this; its establishment compared with strength; turnover (including an analysis of the reasons why people leave the force), and Essex Police's diversity profile. This details the proportion of officers and staff who are from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background as well as the number and proportion of BAME candidates in the recruitment process compared with the proportion of BAME individuals within the economically active population.

The report also monitors the proportion of BAME Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Special Constables, along with the headcount and proportion of female officers within the regulars, PCSOs and Special Constabulary, as well as levels of engagement with the force's health and wellbeing services, leadership programmes and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

During the year Essex Police launched a new recruitment campaign "We Value Difference" which has been designed to encourage a more diverse range of applicants leading to a more diverse intake of new recruits, moving the force to being more representative of the communities of Essex.

Of the 237 new recruits that have joined Essex Police in the first three quarters of 2020-2021, 21 (8.86%) identified as being BAME.

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

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

In terms of staff, the proportion of BAME staff has increased from 4.09% (93) as at 30th September 2020 to 4.39% (101) as at 31st 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 three to two. Latest figures show that this reduced again to one 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%.

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

This level of detailed reporting by Essex Police and scrutiny by the PFCC provides a clear and transparent process for understanding the strategic ambition set out by both organisations and how progress is tracking against this ambition. The close scrutiny is also essential to ensure the PFCC fulfils their own obligations in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty and EDI objectives.

In terms of the Commissioner's office staff, representation in the office has remained largely static over the year, however we have seen a slight increase in the proportion of female staff and a proportionate reduction in male staff. We have also seen a significant reduction in the proportion of staff declining to state their ethnicity and a slight increase in the proportion of staff declaring that they have a disability.

	01/04/2020	01/07/2020	01/10/2020	01/01/2021	01/04/2021
Gender:					
• Male	15.8%	13.0%	13.6%	12.5%	12.5%
• Female	84.2%	87.0%	86.4%	87.5%	87.5%
• Not stated	-	-	-	-	-
Ethnicity:					
• BAME	-	4.3%	-	4.2%	4.2%
• White Grouped	89.5%	82.6%	86.4%	83.3%	91.7%
• Declined to state	10.5%	13.0%	13.6%	12.5%	4.2%
• Not stated	-	-	-	-	-
Disability:					
• No	26.3%	21.7%	22.7%	20.8%	20.8%
• Yes	-	-	-	-	4.2%
• Not stated	73.7%	78.3%	77.3%	79.2%	75.0%

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

Linked to this, the PFCC's Performance and Resources Board has continued to receive quarterly digests of the results of the jointly commissioned ongoing independent public perception survey, which explores a number of themes and factors influencing confidence in local policing, including the extent to which the force is perceived to understand community issues and the extent to which the force is perceived to use its stop and search powers fairly and respectfully. This year the survey has also included specific questions relating to the force's approach to policing the COVID pandemic including support for the approach and

effective and appropriate communication. The results for the confidence survey are broken down by gender, age bands and ethnicity, and whether the respondent has been a victim of crime or not, and reveal that:

- Those aged under 35 or over 55 and female are more likely to think Essex Police are doing a good or excellent job.
- Those identifying as white are significantly more likely to believe Essex Police are doing a good or excellent job than those identifying as BAME, with a 5% difference between these two groups.
- Across the board all groups have shown a similar significant increase in confidence in Essex Police over the last year (around an 11% increase).
- A similar positive trend is seen across all groups when asked whether Essex Police understand the issues affecting their community and when they are asked if they believe Essex Police are dealing with crime and ASB in their area.
- All groups have also seen an increase in confidence that they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint about the police. While those who identified as BAME show a significantly lower level of confidence in this area (74% compared to 81% for those identifying as white) the gap has closed with a faster level of improvement in those identifying as BAME than for those identifying as white (14% compared to 11%).
- While confidence from all groups, except for victims, was broadly similar when asked if they felt they would receive a good service if they were to report a crime, this measure has again improved significantly over the year.
- Overall, there has been a significant improvement in the number of respondents who are confident that the police use their stop and search powers fairly and respectfully, up to 76% overall in the year to December 2020 compared to 69% in the previous twelve months.

As the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA), the PFCC has likewise continued to receive quarterly HR reports detailing, amongst other things, staff sickness levels and the reasons for this; use of the Occupational Health service; employee case management; inclusion and diversity data and actions taken by the fire and rescue service to make its workforce more reflective of the local community; the work of the Inclusion and Diversity Delivery Group, and the training offered to and taken up by staff.

Early in the year, the PFCC approved the PFCCFRA People Strategy which included work to increase the diversity of the Service's workforce. Taken alongside the Annual Workforce Plan which was also scrutinised by Strategic Board early in 2020-21, these provide a valuable insight into the strategic intent of the service in terms of workforce diversity and the progress being made.

The Annual Workforce Plan showed a slow but sustained increase in the proportion of fire fighters who are female. While there is still a long way to go before the service reflects the communities it serves, this is a step in the right direction regarding a subject where the PFCC has provided robust and consistent scrutiny. It is also a good indication of the positive results being achieved through a careful and consistent approach to recruitment including

various positive actions to promote the roles to more diverse communities. The Service's Gender Pay Gap Report was also scrutinised at the Commissioner's boards and showed a mean gap of 2.4% which is below the national average of 7.3% and an improvement on the previous year. This was driven largely by an increase in the representation of women in the middle and upper quartiles of paid roles within the service.

However, the Plan also showed that, of the 55.5% of employees who provided data on their ethnicity, only 4.7% identify as being from a non-white ethnic group. This represents challenges both in terms of the lack of reporting and the issues that may be causing this and the lack of ethnic diversity within the service.

Throughout 2020/21, the PFCC continued to exercise oversight of the delivery of the fire and rescue service's Culture Improvement Plan, which includes the next phase of Dignity at Work training; activities to encourage the self-declaration of diversity data on people systems; awareness raising sessions on a range of inclusion and diversity themes (e.g. neurodiversity); an equality review of the service's approach to recruitment and progression, and a commitment to implement a best practice apprenticeship and internship programme with a focus on increasing diversity.

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

During 2020 -21, the PFCC's office also continued with its regular desktop audit to ensure that all data that is required to be published by the PFCC, Essex Police or the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service under various Specified Information Orders is being made publicly available. This led to regular updates on data regarding the proportion of PFCC and PFCCFRA staff who are female; from a BAME background, and / or who have a disability. During the year, the PFCC's office was also recognised by an independent organisation for the transparency and accessibility of the information it publishes on its site.

During 2020/21, the PFCC commissioned an independent company to carry out an audit of its website and to work with the staff team to ensure that it complied with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 by the statutory deadline of 23 September 2020. This work has provided assurance that the PFCC's website is accessible to as many people as possible, including those with impaired vision, motor difficulties, cognitive impairments, learning disabilities, and deafness or impaired hearing.

Engagement

Following the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic early in 2020-21 and the government's decision to delay the PFCC election, the PFCC's anticipated engagement activity had to be reconsidered to deal with the implications of these two events.

Early in the year, the PFCC took the decision to refresh the Police and Crime Plan as the previous plan had come to an end and to address the emerging challenges of the coming year. In developing this Plan, the PFCC took considerable efforts to engage with a wide and varied range of stakeholders. Specific virtual workshops were held to reach out to partners and stakeholders, to gain their opinions and the views of the groups they represent. This included specific engagement with groups representing a diverse range of ethnic groups, disability support organisations and representatives from groups with other protected characteristics.

A survey had been developed the year before to seek the opinion of a wide range of members of the public about what they would see as priorities for policing and community safety in Essex. Nearly 1,000 people completed the survey from a range of backgrounds and the results were fed into the Police and Crime Plan development process. Specific work was also carried out with young people through the Young Essex Assembly to ensure a strong youth voice was included.

An annual engagement plan was developed with the traditional face-to-face engagement being replaced with a range of virtual engagement approaches to reach out to a variety of different communities. After some trial and error an engagement method was developed that attracted large numbers of the public from a broad age range. Over the 15 online meetings held during the year this format reached between 931 and 14,500 people. This compares to between 150 – 30 people per meeting when we hold face-to-face district level engagement activity. However, because of the demographic information available it wasn't possible to know for certain the detailed breakdown of the audience.

To mitigate the risk that our engagement would not reach a full range of the communities across Essex, the PFCC also initiated a range of audience specific engagement. This included partnering with Essex Police to run a virtual conference for Independent Advisory Group members from across Essex. This included representatives from over 100 different groups representing different communities with protected characteristics. The PFCC also ran a youth orientated online engagement event in partnership with the Young Essex Assembly to seek their views on policing in the county. This provided a useful and interactive opportunity to hear from young people from across Essex. This was supplemented by a specific piece of engagement funded by the PFCC and undertaken by Essex Council for Youth Voluntary Services aimed at young people and with a specific focus on those in care and less likely to traditionally engage with the police.

Throughout the year, the PFCC's team was also an active member of the Essex Equality Network and of the Faith Covenant Steering Group. Through these networks they were able to hear directly from groups about concerns they had or issues they were facing. They were also able to help communicate public health messages and public order messages as appropriate and on behalf of the wider local government system.

Given the nature of the year, the PFCC and their office also became heavily involved in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic which included specific support for activities undertaken by the Essex Resilience Forum to reach communities across Essex and provide strong, supportive and consistent public health based messaging. To support this work the PFCC started a regular weekly video blog which was promoted to a broad range of people across Essex to provide a consistent and public voice for safety-based messages. The PFCC's office was also instrumental to linking community groups up with health partners and community safety specialists. This was of particular importance as the partners worked hard to ensure that vulnerable people, who had been asked to shield were supported and received good quality trustworthy information.

Decision Making

During 2020/21, the PFCC's report templates have continued to require report authors to set out the relevant equality considerations and the steps that will be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts identified. Significant decisions by the Commissioner such as the extension of the Police and Crime Plan and the development of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy have been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

All staff in the PFCC's office have received mandatory diversity training which included a specific element on how to use the EIA process effectively to consider and mitigate any adverse impact on groups with protected characteristics. The PFCC, Deputy PFCC and the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer also attended training and briefings on race disparity in policing organised by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) in February 2021.

Through their Strategic Boards, the PFCC has overseen the development and implementation of key policies within Essex Police and the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service which impact on equality, diversity and inclusion. Examples include ECFRS's People Strategy, Integrated Risk Management Plan, and their Prevention Strategy as well as the Essex Police's Diversity Equality and Inclusion Strategy.

Following on from work started in 2019-2020, the PFCC and their Senior Management Team (SMT) concluded work supported by Essex County Council to improve their equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) practice, develop a new EDI Strategy and test the current policies and procedures against best practice. This work commenced in the final quarter of 2019/20 and was completed in the third quarter of 2020/21 following a brief delay caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Service Delivery

During 2020/21, the PFCC and their staff team have also continued to take a strong role in improving outcomes for people with protected characteristics and promoting good relations and equality of opportunity across Essex by both commissioning services and actively participating in key strategic partnerships. In terms of partnerships this has included the various Safeguarding Boards; the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) and the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership (SASP).

The PFCC also continued to provide core funding from the Community Safety Fund to a range of partner organisations and partnerships, including those who support people with protected characteristics. Of the £1,195,908 core funding allocated in 2020/21, a total of £198,583 was allocated to the six Safeguarding Boards operating across Greater Essex whilst £443,835 was shared between the three Youth Offending Services.

Jane Gardner, the Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, chaired the countywide Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB) throughout the year. This is made up of partners from across Essex with a focus on working together to support victims and reduce offending.

In May 2020, SETDAB launched a new, ambitious five-year strategy which focuses on the delivering five key outcomes:

Outcome 1: Children and young people can recognise and form healthy relationships.

Outcome 2: People experiencing and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse are supported to be and feel safe.

Outcome 3: Everyone can rebuild their lives and live free from domestic abuse.

Outcome 4: Supporting and disrupting perpetrators to change their behaviour and break the cycle of domestic abuse.

Outcome 5: Communities, professionals and employers are able to recognise domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and have the confidence to take action.

On behalf of the Board, the PFCC took the lead on outcome 2.

To support people experiencing and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse, a wide range of specialist services are commissioned by the PFCC which provide specialist, tailored support when and where it is most effective.

Victim Support is the first level of support provided and offers a wide range of general support for all victims of crime. This high-volume service received £1,650,000 over the last three years to provide this important function.

Specialist domestic abuse organisations such as Next Chapter, Safe Steps and Changing Pathways are provided with £2.465 million as part of a jointly commissioned contract with Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Council worth over £14.875 over five years. This funding delivers an integrated domestic abuse support service including refuges, Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors and community-based support. This funding includes the delivery of a seven-day a week, single point of access; the Compass helpline, which delivers advice and support for victims and professionals.

Specialist support services are also commissioned for the victims of rape and sexual abuse, including historic child sexual abuse. Over three years, the Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership receives £5.281 million to deliver specialist support across the county including therapeutic support, advocacy, counselling and Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs). Synergy

also offers a single point of contact for victims of abuse to engage through, ensuring help and advice can be found in a consistent and accessible way.

This year a new two-year funding arrangement was put in place for an additional six Independent Sexual Violence Advisors as part of a broader initiative to provide more support earlier in the process. This is to help victims and improve the number of cases that make it through to the courts. Between October and December 2020, the number of victims referred to ISVA increased by 84 per cent compared to the same period a year earlier, an increase from 159 to 289.

The national lockdown presented new challenges around domestic abuse and heightened concern for victims. To manage this potential risk, a wide range of activity was developed to reach out to potential victims and perpetrators to reduce the risk of incidents occurring and ensure that victims could access support.

The pandemic also put significant strain on the court system which has led to delays for victims, witnesses, and defendants in having their cases heard. We have been working hard with Criminal Justice Partners through the Criminal Justice Board to contribute to the effective management of this situation and ensure wherever possible that the impact on those involved is minimised.

The Commissioner secured £605,967 of extra funding for local domestic abuse charities to increase the capacity of local services. The funding also helped to make venues and services COVID-secure, so they could continue to provide vital support to victims. Sexual violence organisations were also provided with £415,000 to support their work during COVID including the provision of extra counselling.

The Commissioner has also invested heavily in perpetrator behaviour change programmes to confront and change dangerous behaviour before it can cause more harm. In Essex, this work is delivered by The Change Project. The Commissioner has provided £170,000 to deliver the programme which has had over 280 referrals in the last year and has been able to deliver a 95 per cent reduction in physical violence. This is important work and vital to driving down the number of people affected by domestic abuse in our county.

The success of this project led to a further investment of £219,000 by the Commissioner to provide additional capacity to deliver domestic abuse perpetrator change programmes to targeted communities including BAME, LGBTQ+ and rural communities in Essex. There are areas where research indicates that domestic abuse is underreported. The funding was also used to deliver training to front line professionals in order to prevent adolescent to parent violence.

The PFCC also continued to commission services to support victims of crime, which includes victims of sexual violence and abuse. In Essex, the demand has grown significantly in recent years. Between 2018 and 2020, new referrals into support services increased by 29% (data provided by Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership).

NHS England and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex jointly commission the Essex Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which is a safe place for victims of sexual assault to be examined, interviewed, and referred to further support services. They help victims understand their options and make an informed choice in deciding how they wish to proceed. SARC examinations have seen an increase in demand for their services by 16% between 2018 and 2020).

Essex is also one of only five local areas that successfully applied to receive devolved Rape Support Funding from the Ministry of Justice. This has brought commissioning services to a much more local level allowing the partnership, through the Commissioner, to tailor support to the needs of our communities.

Sexual violence happens both within coercive, intimate relationships and within wider family relationships. Data from Essex Rape Crisis Partnership shows that 23% of victims aged 16 and over had experienced sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner. An additional 33% of victims had experienced sexual violence and child sexual abuse within their family, perpetrated by a family member (predominantly father, stepfather, grandfather or brother).

In the 12 months up to February 2021, there was a 5.1% fall in the number of recorded Child Abuse offences (a reduction of 284) compared to the same period 12 months earlier. While this is a positive trend there is still much more that we can do to protect those affected by these crimes.

As part of the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership, our approach to tackling serious sexual violence is set out in the Essex Sexual Abuse Strategy. This was developed in 2020-2021 and brought together a range of stakeholders including councils, charities, support organisations, health partners and the emergency services. It aims to help organisations work together to prevent the volume and impact of sexual violence and abuse in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. It focuses on prevention, victim services, building awareness, partnership working across the criminal justice system as well as on perpetrators.

The ambition of the Partnership is to ensure there is a clear understanding of consent amongst children and young people, that victims can access appropriate support, and the rate of sexual abuse charges and prosecutions increases as victims feel more confident in coming forwards.

There has already been some strong initiatives that have been developed through the Partnership including the First Responders project, which ensures victims of crime receive support within 24 hours from when they choose to report the crime and the Drink Aware initiative, which is a preventative programme safeguarding those who are most vulnerable during the night time economy, by working with local businesses, third sector agencies and Police.

While much more work is underway, the development of the strategy marks an important step forward in providing a joined up and sustained approach to tackling sexual violence in our communities.

Another area of crime which can affect people with a protected characteristic in our society is hate crime. Essex Police and the Commissioner also work closely with partners to promote the reporting, prevention and prosecution of hate crime through the Hate Crime Partnership. Since 2018, the Partnership has been implementing the Hate Crime Prevention Strategy which aims to improve victim satisfaction with the response to hate crime across Essex by dismantling barriers to reporting hate crime, improving operational response to hate crime, and tackling hate crime by increasing public awareness and promoting positive values.

To achieve these objectives the Partnership focuses on; understanding and preventing hate crime, increasing reporting and support for victims and improving our shared operational response to hate crimes.

Together the partnership has worked hard over the year to increase the reporting of hate crime by building stronger relationships with communities, better collaboration with the Independent Advisory Groups and delivering more visible publicity, including a Crimestoppers' online hate crime campaign that reached over 1.2 million people and a multi lingual "Stop the Hate" leaflet.

Between January and December 2020, Essex Police received 3,600 reports of hate crime, a 14.4% increase on the same period the year before. This increase is attributed to increased awareness of reporting mechanisms and the positive result of the public being more confident in reporting incidents. This has been driven, in part by the promotional activity set out above. Over the same period, Victim Support received nearly 1,000 referrals for victims affected by hate crime, including 90 children and young people.

These reports were supported by over 800 Hate Crime Ambassadors trained by Essex Police and 50 Hate Incident Reporting Centres spread across Essex. Awareness of Hate Crime in schools has also been a focus with programmes delivered to over 18,000 students since 2018.

The PFCC has also continued to fulfil their obligations under the Police Reform Act 2002 to provide an Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme to ensure that the statutory and human rights of detainees are protected whilst in custody. During 2020/21, the scheme had to adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic but working with partners nationally and regionally this was done successfully. During the year the Scheme has raised a number of important issues including availability of PPE, feedback on the translation scheme used in custody and providing input into the PFCC's response into the Home Office consultation around Deaths in Custody.

This year was the sixth year of operation for the Essex Restorative and Mediation Service (ERMS) delivered by the PFCC's office. The team offers a valuable service and helps both victims and perpetrators move on with their lives as well as building understanding and fostering good relations between different individuals and communities. The team has grown from two members of staff when the service launched in 2015, to four in 2020, managing a team of 40 trained volunteers. Traditionally carried out face-to-face, the team had to adapt to changing circumstances caused by the pandemic this year. Even given this

challenge, the team processed 297 referrals and 55 cases were carried out using socially distanced meetings or virtual discussions, leading to 156 participants being engaged in the restorative process.

Feedback from victims has been very positive with the service being rated 4.5 / 5. Two thirds of those asked reported that the process had a positive impact on their situation and 80% said they felt better after speaking with facilitators. 80% of victims would recommend the service to others. General feedback was equally as positive and as an example one victim said “I think your understanding and sensitivity in these issues is faultless”.

Satisfaction rates for those responsible for the harm was even higher with the service being rated at 4.9 out of 5. All of those who responded felt the process had had a positive impact on them and agreed that they had a better understanding of “how your actions affect others as a result of this process” and “do you think that you will behave differently in future as a result of the RJ process”. 100% of referrers said they would use the service again and rated it an average of 4.8 out of 5.

Over the last year, the service has focused on improving restorative justice access for victims of domestic abuse, which led to an increase in referrals in domestic abuse cases of 57% on the year before. Lots of discussions have been had with relevant services, and during International Restorative Justice Week, the service hosted a webinar around the use of RJ in domestic abuse cases which was attended by over 160 people.

The Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit (VVU) – led by a member of the PFCC’s staff – also continued its important work during 2020/21. Using more than £2.5m of funding secured from the Home Office, the PFCC and Essex County Council, the VVU continued to provide a range of services and interventions including mentoring; targeted youth services and diversionary activities; therapeutic interventions, and increased analyst capacity. The joint budget also funded a school wellbeing service in Thurrock; Hidden Harm Workers in Essex; a manager post within the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to consider the safeguarding arrangements when young people transition between the youth and adult justice systems, and a project based in hospital A&E departments to engage gang-affected young people at a key “reachable moment”. The VVU also delivered a series of local and countywide conferences and training events for the front-line workforce, as well as a communications campaign and various pieces of evaluation work. The PFCC continues to chair the Violence and Vulnerability Strategic Executive Group and Round Table that exercises strategic oversight and direction of this work.

Commissioning and Grant Giving

During 2020-21, the PFCC undertook a review of the demographic data and evaluation of commissioned services and grants provided throughout the year. As a result of this review several changes were made to provide more robust and comprehensive data in the future. This resulted in stronger expectations on organisations and agencies securing small grants and will mean that by the end of 2021-2022 we should be in a position to better understand the impact our services have on our ability to deliver our Public Sector Equality

Duty allowing us to better evaluate and adapt our broad range of interventions to best deliver for our communities.

During 2020/21 the PFCC has improved data demographic information being provided by serviced commissioned to support victims of crime with the data reported setting out the demographic information of the number of referrals the services receive. This is set out below and is benchmarked against the Office of National Statistics demographic data.

	2019/20	2020/21	Benchmark
Gender:			
• Female	72.64%	63.87%	51.03%
• Male	27.11%	35.83%	48.97%
• Non binary	0.25%	0.30%	-
Ethnicity:			
• White Grouped	87.85%	92.94%	87.33%
• BAME	12.15%	7.06%	12.67%
Disability:			
• Yes	26.3%	21.7%	22.7%
• No	73.7%	78.3%	77.3%
Sexual Orientation:			
• Heterosexual / Straight	89.80%	92.25%	94.60%
• Gay / Lesbian	3.55%	2.54%	1.40%
• Bisexual	5.21%	4.14%	0.90%
• Other	1.44%	1.07%	0.60%

The above data highlights that the PFCC has improved male victim engagement with support services. This can be tied to the work undertaken through Victim Support to launch an online support space and live chat service. Data from the service shows that men are proportionately higher to engage with support through these channels.

The data also shows that the percentage of people with a disability engage has decreased slightly from the previous year. This has happened while the services have worked to improve their processes for capturing disability. It is believed that there are more people using the service who have a disability, particularly regarding to mental health, however, this is not always disclosed and captured accurately. Work will continue over the year through the services to improve their ability to encourage people to disclose this information.

In 2021/22 the PFCC is seeking additional funding to support people with complex needs that require domestic abuse support service and it is anticipated that should this request for funding be successful we will be able to reach a higher proportion of our BAME communities.

During 2020/21 the proportion of people supported who declared they were from a BAME community decreased. This coincided with a significant increase in the accuracy of the data collected so may reflect a more accurate picture rather than an actual decline, however that is unclear from the data we currently hold. To put this in context the 2019 data was taken from a review of 10,959 cases while for 2020 that data was taken from 21,711 cases. This provides a much better understanding of those accessing the service and a stronger more robust data set.

During 2020/21, due to the restrictions put in place due to COVID our support services have not been able to do the same level of community engagement that they were previously. This has meant that community workers who engage directly with local communities and raise awareness within those communities haven't been able to perform the same role as effectively. The PFCC is working with commissioned providers to re-introduce community engagement work as soon as it is safe to do so. The reduction in community engagement activity has made a particularly big impact on African and Indian communities and these will be prioritised in 2021/22.

Having identified this gap the PFCC has also used a small grant programme to encourage and provide additional support for specialist organisations that support those from underrepresented communities.

As well as the grants and services detailed in the sections above, the PFCC also continued to provide financial support to a wide range of partnership projects and initiatives supporting those with protected characteristics and promoting community cohesion. Some examples of this work are below.

- The PFCC awarded £4375 to the Thurrock Coalition which has been set up to ensure that individuals get all the information they may require to get the support and care that they or their families/relatives need. Funding will be used for The LPA Champions project which actively increases understanding and awareness of key issues facing disabled people, older people, their families and carers, particularly in the context of safeguarding them from potential financial and/or emotional and physical abuse
- The PFCC provided £15,000 of funding to be used to employ an Activity Leader that will use a creative and flexible approach to engaging young people. This role will provide several opportunities for young people on the periphery of drugs and knife crime: Firstly, the intention is to take them out of their current limited environments away from negative influences and give them a chance to spend time outdoors to gain a sense of space and freedom and develop new skills and resilience and a wider

perspective. Secondly this role would be able to link with key projects in West Clacton, such as the Man Shed and Bike Kitchen, and create other opportunities in the community where they can develop skills but also help build a positive community spirit.

- The PFCC contributed £6,500 towards the The Kick Off @ 3 initiative that strives to engage with young people, using sport, music and other imaginative ideas to spread awareness and break down traditional barriers between the police service and hard-to-reach communities.
 - The PFCC also provided £25,000 from the 2020-21 Community Safety Fund to Tendring Citizens Advice Bureau. The Hub is based within the Community Clothing Project located in Clacton-on-Sea which provides volunteering opportunities for people with mental ill health, and operates a client drop-in, advice and support service. The Hub provides a safe and supportive environment as well as volunteering opportunities for people with mental ill health which aims to reduce social isolation, and improve self-confidence, resilience and health and wellbeing. The activities support progression of volunteers into mainstream volunteering, training and employment. Additional benefits flow into the community with residents benefiting from reduced poverty, increased physical activity, take up of employment and improvements in health and wellbeing as well as promoting community cohesion.
 - £55,000 was provided to work with identified individuals within the prison setting, including dedicated prison officer support and a course to address and reflect on offending behaviour.
 - The PFCC allocated £14,000 to Together Free Southend Against Modern Slavery, a community group led by a coordinator who empowers the local community to work together in order to tackle modern slavery. The group has been very successful with over 30 members. The group continues to grow and has delivered awareness raising events and training and provided support for victims.
- Changing Lives in Harlow received a grant of £10,000 to engage vulnerable young people, diverting them away from anti-social behaviour but also engaging them in activities and educating about the danger and impact of crime including gang activity. Funding contributed to the core costs in order to deliver this programme of work.

Staff Representation

Whilst the data has remained largely static over the year, we we have seen a slight increase in the proportion of female staff (and therefore a proportionate reduction in male colleagues); a significant reduction in the proportion of staff declining to state their ethnicity, and a slight increase in the proportion of staff declaring that they have a disability, as follows:

	01/04/2020	01/07/2020	01/10/2020	01/01/2021	01/04/2021
Gender:					
• Male	15.8%	13.0%	13.6%	12.5%	12.5%
• Female	84.2%	87.0%	86.4%	87.5%	87.5%
• Not stated	-	-	-	-	-
Ethnicity:					
• BAME	-	4.3%	-	4.2%	4.2%
• White Grouped	89.5%	82.6%	86.4%	83.3%	91.7%
• Declined to state	10.5%	13.0%	13.6%	12.5%	4.2%
• Not stated	-	-	-	-	-
Disability:					
• No	26.3%	21.7%	22.7%	20.8%	20.8%
• Yes	-	-	-	-	4.2%
• Not stated	73.7%	78.3%	77.3%	79.2%	75.0%