

## Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2021

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

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>HR Strategic Dashboard Supplementary Report</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> March 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, and where applicable to the full financial year 2019/20 or the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The report highlights a number of areas that remain on track or have improved significantly. Specifically, the force reports:

- The continued attraction and recruitment of new officers into the force which has resulted in the establishment for the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and year 1 of the national uplift being exceeded.
- Reductions in officer and staff vacancies across a number of commands, specifically officer vacancy levels in the Serious Crime Directorate (SCD) and Local Policing Support Unit (LPSU), which were previously identified as an outlier in the January 2021 report.
- An increase in officer application numbers in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 for all applications and specifically with regards to the proportion of applications from ethnic minorities.
- Early signs in April 2021 of strong officer application numbers from ethnic minority candidates and female applicants.
- The highest proportion of ethnic minority officer joiners within the last 9 years joined the force in 2020/21.
- The officer ethnic minority position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 represents the highest proportion of ethnic minority officers in force over the last 8 years.
- A significant reduction in officer and staff turnover in 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20 (which also represents the lowest level of turnover within the last 9 years).
- A significant reduction in officer and staff absence across all absence terms.
- A reduction in officer and staff average days lost per person to sickness absence across the majority of general absence reasons.
- An increase in the total duty hours worked and average hours per Special Constabulary officer for 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20.
- Improved self-declaration of protected characteristics by the workforce when compared to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

Whilst the position is mostly positive the report identifies areas of focus along with relevant context and activity in place to improve the position. Areas of focus relate to continuing to seek increases in the proportion of applications from ethnic minorities and females (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

It was approved at Chief Officer Group (COG) on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 that underspend from the 2020/21 financial year could be utilised to over recruit in year. As a result of this, the officer strength fte as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 ended on 3412.83 fte which was 43.83 fte over the establishment of 3369.00. For information, the recruitment profile for 2021/22 has been adjusted to account for this.

The strength fte of 3412.83 fte represents a net increase of 46.12 fte since the last HR report as at 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The approval to end the financial year over puts the force in a strong position with regards to progressing towards the achievement of the year 2 national uplift.

There have been positive reductions in the vacancy percentage across a number of Commands which is outlined on the second tab of the HR Strategic Dashboard. The Serious Crime Directorate were identified as having the highest vacancy rate in the previous HR data pack as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (16.11%), however, whilst the vacancy rate remains high, it has reduced to 12.19% (a net reduction of 3.92 percentage points).

Similarly, Local Policing Support Unit were identified as having the second highest vacancy rate as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (11.36%), however this has reduced significantly to just 3.93%. The Operational Policing Command have the third highest vacancy rate with 6.93% but again, this is also a reduction when compared to January 2021 (7.06%).

The only other exception to report is a significant reduction in the Crime & Public Protection Command vacancy rate which has reduced from 10.18% to 6.04%.

#### Recruitment Joiners and Applications

Since the last HR data pack as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, an additional 71 officers have joined the force (between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021).

As a result, this means, for the full 2020/21 financial year a total of 308 officers joined the force. Of this number, 267 joined through the standard police constable entry route, 15 re-joined/returned and 26 transferred in from other forces.

The table over page shows the officer application numbers by month for the year 2020/21, including a summary of the 2019/20 position for comparison and the latest data available at the time of writing for April 2021:

Month	Total	Female		BAME	
		No.	%	No.	%
Apr-20	472	204	43.22	51	10.81
May-20	300	111	37.00	44	14.67
Jun-20	310	104	33.55	23	7.42
Jul-20	265	74	27.92	31	11.70
Aug-20	236	71	30.08	24	10.17
Sep-20	324	100	30.86	38	11.73
Oct-20	387	151	39.02	62	16.02
Nov-20	286	131	45.80	45	15.73
Dec-20	147	53	36.05	32	21.77
Jan-21	317	85	26.81	47	14.83
Feb-21	228	78	34.21	23	10.09
Mar-21	220	77	35.00	22	10.00
<b>2020/21 Total</b>	<b>3492</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>35.48</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>12.66</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2683</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>32.46</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>9.80</b>
Apr-21	48	21	43.75	7	14.58

The table shows that application numbers increased significantly in 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20 for all applications including females and ethnic minorities.

It was reported in the January 2021 update that the proportion of female applications had reduced in January 2021 (26.81%), however, the data shows that the proportion of female applications improved in February 2021, increasing to 34.21% and again in March 2021 to 35.00%. The current data for April 2021 is also positive with 43.75% of applications being from females, however this is data from early in the month.

With regards to ethnic minority candidates, the proportion of applications for 2020/21 was 12.66% which is a significant increase when compared to 2019/20 (9.80%). Analysis also shows there has been a positive increase in the number and proportion of applications from Black/African/Caribbean/Black British candidates over the last 3 full financial years, as can be seen below:

- 2018/19 = 30 applications / 1.88% of total applications.
- 2019/20 = 69 applications / 2.57% of total applications.
- 2020/21 = 90 applications / 2.58% of total applications.

Whilst there was a reduction in the proportion of applications from ethnic minority candidates in February 2021 (10.09%) and March 2021 (10.00%), this is still higher than then the current force total (3.72% as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021) and the economically active population (6.56%). In addition, as seen with female applications, the early figures for April 2021 are positive with 14.58% of applications from ethnic minority candidates. For Black/African/Caribbean/Black British candidates specifically it is 4.17% (4 out of 48).

As previously reported, to ensure the attraction of female candidates, together with ethnic minority candidates remains strong, the channel plan for quarter 4 as part of the #WeValueDifference campaign focused heavily on attracting females, through social media and television. This is to be repeated through the new phase of the campaign

in 2022/23. Further information of Positive Action work in this area is outlined in section 8 of this report.

### **Turnover**

In 2020/21 a total of 195 officers left the force, which, when measured as a proportion of the average headcount for the financial year, is a turnover percentage of 5.68%. This is a headcount reduction of 52 when compared to 2019/20 (247 leavers) and a turnover percentage point reduction of 1.89 (7.57% turnover in 2019/20).

From a headcount perspective, 195 leavers represent the lowest number of leavers since 2013/14 (where 194 left) and the turnover percentage of 5.68% for 2020/21 represents the lowest level of turnover over the last 9 years.

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has potentially had a positive impact on the workforce in areas such as turnover (and absence as identified later in the report). However, whilst the improved turnover position is positive, it is important to note the reduction is likely to have been impacted by the significant change in the external job market. A reduction in job availability may be a contributing factor resulting in a greater number of people staying in roles longer than they would under normal circumstances.

However, the latest CIPD labour market outlook<sup>1</sup> is the first CIPD/Adecco Labour market outlook report to signal positive employment prospects since the onset of the pandemic. The report states this is driven by greater optimism among private sector employers and a greater proportion of whom look set to increase their employment levels in the first quarter of 2021. Therefore, it is necessary to note that this may result in increased turnover throughout 2021/22.

### **Ethnicity and Gender**

Of the 267 new officer recruits that joined in 2020/21, 26 (9.74%) were ethnic minority recruits. Of the other 41 that either re-joined or transferred in, 3 (7.31%) were ethnic minority recruits.

Therefore, a total of 308 officers have joined the force, of which 29 (9.42%) were ethnic minority recruits. This is a significant increase when compared to 2019/20 (6.67%) and represents the highest proportion of ethnic minority recruits over the last 11 years.

For information the below table demonstrates the proportion of ethnic minority officers that have joined (all entry routes) by ethnicity grouping:

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<sup>1</sup> Labour Market Outlook (CIPD) Winter 2020-21

Ethnic Group	H'Count	%
Asian/Asian British	8	27.59
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	7	24.14
Mixed/Multiple ethnic Groups	12	41.38
Other Ethnic Group	2	6.90
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.00</b>

In 2020/21, 7 out of 29 (24.14%) ethnic minority joiners were Black/African/Caribbean/Black British. This equates to 2.27% of the total officer joiners (308) and is more than the total number of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British joiners combined from 2009/10 to 2019/20 (5 over the 10-year period).

As a result of the high proportion of ethnic minority joiners this financial year, the representation of ethnic minority officers has increased to a headcount of 130 (3.72%). This is a net headcount increase of 6 and a percentage point increase of 0.72 when compared to the last HR data report (124 / 3.60%). It also represents a net headcount increase of 23 and a percentage point increase of 0.55 when compared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

The current proportion of 3.72% demonstrates the highest proportion of ethnic minority officers in the force over the last 8 years and is now only 2.84 percentage points under the economically active population of Essex (6.56%<sup>2</sup>).

With regards to applications, as at 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021, 109 were from ethnic minority candidates, which represents 10.31% of the 1057 total candidates in the recruitment and selection process.

With regards to gender, of the 267 new recruits that joined in 2020/21, 101 (37.83%) were female. Of the other 41 that either re-joined or transferred in, 11 (26.83%) were female. Therefore, a total of 308 officers have joined the force, of which 112 (36.36%) were female. This is marginally higher than the proportion that joined in 2019/20 (36.13%) but marginally lower than 2018/19 (36.99%).

With regards to current applications, there are currently 388 female candidates in progress which equates to 36.71% of all candidates.

### **Absence**

The average days lost per person has reduced from 9.21 in 2019/20 to just 6.57 in 2020/21 (a reduction of 2.64 average days per person). This represents the lowest level of absence over the last 6 years.

The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the % of available contracted hours lost for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20.:

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<sup>2</sup> 2011 National Census Data

Employee Group	Apr - Mar 2019/20		Apr - Mar 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	240467.54	4.28%	180342.71	3.04%	-60124.83	-1.24%

The figures demonstrate that 3.04% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence in 2020/21, which is a reduction when compared to 2019/20 (4.28%). This is a reduction of 60,124.83 payroll hours over this reporting period.

With regards to absence terms, it was reported in the previous HR data pack that medium-term absence had increased marginally, however, for the full 2020/21 financial year, there have been reductions in all absence terms when compared to 2019/20. Short-term absence has reduced from 2.27 average days lost per person to 1.34, medium-term has reduced from 1.10 to 1.05 and long-term absence has reduced from 5.85 to 4.18.

Psychological related absences continue to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (39.94%), however when measured as average days lost per person, this has reduced significantly from 3.55 in 2019/20 to 2.62 in 2020/21.

Respiratory related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost in 2020/21 with 13.37% compared to 11.09% in 2019/20. However, as with psychological related absence, when measured as average days lost per person, this has reduced from 1.02 to 0.88 for the same period.

Across the 12 general absence reasons, for the same reporting periods, there have been reductions in the average days lost per person for all but 2 of them. Skin related absences have increased from 0.02 to 0.07 average days lost per person, however this absence reason only accounts for 1.04% of total payroll hours lost. The other absence reason that has increased is miscellaneous, from 0.48 average days lost per person to 0.61. The reason for this is due to a significant increase in the number of payroll hours lost to post-operative recovery (3858 hours increasing to 8563) and an increase in the number of payroll hours lost to cancer (543 hours increasing to 2904).

With regards to Command analysis only 2 Commands have seen an increase in absence in 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20 (Criminal Justice Command and Support Services). Criminal Justice Command have increased from 5593 payroll hours lost in 2019/20 to 7580 in 2020/21. The increase is predominantly due to absence within custody areas, where the average days lost per person is an outlier at 14.60. This can be largely attributed to increases in the number of payroll hours lost for psychological reasons (increasing from 1754 to 3881) and digestive related absences, which have increased from 347 payroll hours lost to 820. However, it should be noted that absence levels reduced in quarter 4, with March 2021 showing the lowest number of hours lost per person (5.64) since May 2020 (5.18). This would indicate that absence is starting to improve in this Command.

With regards to Support Services the increase from 4.13 average days lost per person in 2019/20 to 6.41 in 2020/21 can be attributed predominantly to a long-term skin related absence, and a long-term instance of cardiac/circulatory related absence.

Contact Management and the ERSOU have the highest and third highest average days lost per person respectively, however both have reduced significantly when compared to last year. Of the three Local Policing Areas (LPAs) the North have the highest average days lost per person with 6.59, however this is a significant reduction when compared to the last year (10.68) 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 (36.25%) followed by musculo/skeletal (14.18%).

### **Adjusted and Recuperative Duties**

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative and adjusted duties has increased from 362 as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 376 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Whilst some Commands have fewer officers on adjusted and recuperative duties, the reason for this increase is predominantly due a higher number of officers on adjusted or recuperative duties in the West Local Policing Area (increase of 9), Crime & Public Protection (increase of 6) and North Local Policing Area (increase of 4).

It should be noted however, that whilst the number of officers on adjusted or recuperative duties has increased to 376, this equates to 10.82% which is lower than the same position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (404 / 12.00%).

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

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

The police staff strength as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 was 2132.18 fte, which is 161.54 fte under the establishment of 2293.72 and equates to a vacancy rate of 6.96%. This is a significant improvement when compared to the last HR data pack as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, where the number of vacancies were 191.47 fte (8.37% vacancy rate).

Of the 14 Commands listed with an establishment on the 'Est v Str tab' of the HR Strategic Dashboard, 10 have a lower vacancy rate as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, when compared to the last HR data pack as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 and 1 has remained static. Of the other 3 Commands, Crime & Public Protection Command have increased from 6.20% to 7.22%, Legal Department from 13.85% to 16.16% (albeit this only equates to 1.33 fte vacancies (and thus not considered to be a concern) and Strategic Change Performance from 2.26% to 6.98%.

With regards to Crime & Public Protection Command, the vacancies are predominately in the role of Assessment Officer (7.43 fte). Of these vacancies 2 of are on hold for staff covering other temporary positions and the other vacancies have been selected for with candidates at pre-employment checks. As such this is expected to reduce.

In respect of the Strategic Change performance, the vacancy rate has increased to 6.98% however this only equates to 5.70 fte and is spread across a number of departments (Analysis, Change Programme & Projects, Continuous Improvement and



Strategic Change & Performance Command Team). As such this is not considered to be area of concern.

As a point of note, Contact Management were reported in the last update as the main outlier following an increase in the vacancy percentage from 2.76% (as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020) to 4.94% as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, however, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 this had reduced to 2.31%.

With regards to the governance of police staff vacancies, the Force Growth Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable has tracked the progression of growth posts throughout 2020/21. In addition to this, any role within the force that has 4.00 fte or more vacancies are reported to the Strategic Change Coordination Board, also chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable detailing the number of vacancies and any associated activity to mitigate any arising issues.

The PCSO strength as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 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 as a result of the withdrawal of external funding. This will result in the PCSO vacancies reducing to 1.59 fte. Given the low number of vacancies, Human Resources, Learning & Development, and Corporate Finance are working together to determine the optimum time for the next PCSO intake, as it is necessary to consider the efficiency of training low numbers (and thus having a minimum training course size) and whether there is financial flexibility to recruit over the establishment for the short period of time. It is anticipated the intake will be in quarter 2 of 2021/22 (July 2021 to September 2021).

### **Turnover**

In 2020/21 a total of 174 staff left, which, when measured as a proportion of the average headcount for the financial year, is a turnover percentage of 7.55%. This is a headcount reduction of 20 when compared to 2019/20 (194 leavers) and a turnover percentage point reduction of 1.12 (8.66% turnover in 2019/20).

This level of turnover (both headcount and turnover %) represents the lowest level of turnover over the last 9 years. However, as stated under the officer section, it is important to note the reduction is likely to have been impacted by the significant change in the external job market as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For PCSOs, the turnover percentage increased to 6.96% in 2020/21 compared to 6.75% in 2019/20, however this only represents just 8 leavers for the financial year.

### **Ethnicity and Gender**

Since the last HR data pack, the number and proportion of ethnic minority staff has increased from 101 (4.39%) as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 104 (4.45%) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This also represents a significant increase when compared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (85 / 3.74%) and is the highest proportion of ethnic minority staff over the last 8 years.

With regards to gender, the proportion of females remains high at 65.20% (headcount of 1525) which is marginally lower when compared to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (65.22%) but higher than the end of each financial year from 2013/14 (63.48%) to 2019/20 (65.01%).

With regards to PCSOs, the ethnic minority headcount and proportion has remained the same (1 / 0.91%) as has females (64 / 58.18%).

**Absence**

With regards to the staff absence, the average days lost per person has reduced to 7.09 in 2020/21 from 10.47 in 2019/20 (a reduction of 3.38 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 % of available contracted hours lost for 2020/21 compared to 2019/20.:

Employee Group	Apr - Mar 2019/20		Apr - Mar 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
Staff	173280.62	5.22%	120976.94	3.53%	-52303.68	-1.69%

The figures demonstrate that 3.53% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence in 2020/21, which is a reduction when compared to 2019/20 (5.22%). This is a reduction of payroll 52,303.68 hours over the reporting period.

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

For staff, whilst psychological related absence continues to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (36.31%), the average days lost per person has reduced significantly from 3.30 to 2.58. Similarly, respiratory related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (14.25%), however, the average days lost per person has reduced from 1.27 to 1.01.

Of the 12 general absence reasons, the average days lost per person has reduced in all but 2 of them. These were, skin related absences which increased marginally by 0.01 average days lost per person (from 0.01 to 0.03) and cardiac/circulatory (from 0.31 to 0.41). The main reason for the increase in cardiac/circulatory 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 1797 payroll hours). There have also been increases in payroll hours lost to stroke and chest pains.

Of the 16 Commands, all but 2 have lower average days lost per person in 2020/21 when compared to 2019/20. The Legal Department and Specials Command Team have experienced higher levels of absence, however, they both have a very low headcount, so the absences relate to a small number of individuals. Criminal Justice Command have the highest average days lost per person (9.56), albeit lower than the

same period last year (11.96). Contact Management have the second highest absence (8.81), however this is significantly lower than the same period last year (14.10).

For PCSOs the average days lost per person is 13.31 which is 2.18 average days per person higher than last year (11.13).

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

Employee Group	Apr - Mar 2019/20		Apr - Mar 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	9760.62	5.43%	11273.59	6.49%	1512.97	1.07%

The figures demonstrate that 6.49% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence in 2020/21, which is an increase when compared to 2019/20 (5.43%). This is an increase of 1512.97 payroll hours.

Whilst not the sole reason, this increase can, in part, be attributed to long term absence (specifically 5 long term cases). Of the 5 long term cases, one individual is recovering from complicated shoulder surgery, one is recovering from knee replacement surgery, one was suffering from back pain and two are due to psychological absence. Of these 5 cases only 2 remain absent from work as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

For PCSOs, musculo/skeletal accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (31.43%), followed by psychological (28.79%) and both have increased in terms of average days lost per person, for the reasons cited in the previous paragraph.

### **Recuperative Duties**

The number of staff on recuperative duties has increased from 65 to 81 and PCSOs have increased to 7.

### **Business Case Update**

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, 1 member of police staff left Essex Police on the grounds of redundancy (18 March 2021).

One business case closed in January 2021, the details of which are below.

**EPSA** - consultation launched on 07/12/20 with consultation closing on 05/01/21. There are 2 police staff impacted with one potential job loss (the member of staff has requested voluntary redundancy). Just 1 individual has left the force under redundancy (costs calculated until 18 March 2021).

Two business cases closed in February 2021:

> **Essex Corporate Finance** - Proposal to restructure Corporate Accounting. Consultation launched on 11/01/21 with consultation closing on 11/02/21. A total of 3 police staff are impacted by proposals whereby if the proposal is ratified there is the potential of at least one redundancy. There was 1 member of staff that did not secure a new role as they were not qualified therefore are now being considered for other roles within the force as part of the normal redeployment process.

> **Essex Estates** - Proposal to formalise the structure within Essex Estates. Consultation launched on 25/01/21 with consultation closing on 24/02/21. A total of 4 police staff impacted by proposals. No challenges to the proposal received with new structure commencing on 22/03/21.

Two business cases launched in February 2021:

> **Crime Scene Investigation, SCD** - Proposal to relocate Crime Scene Investigations team from Harlow Police Station to Great Dunmow Police Station; linked to estates need for UKAS assessments. Consultation launched on 12/02/21 with consultation closing on 15/03/21. A total of 9 members of staff are impacted by the organisational proposal. No appeals received and no redundancies expected. Relocates to Grt Dunmow as of 21/06/21.

> **Criminal Intelligence Analyst, IPD, SCD** - Proposal to relocate Criminal Intelligence Analyst from North Kent Police Station to FHQ, Chelmsford and return to Criminal Intelligence Team. Consultation launched on 12/02/21 with consultation closing on 11/03/21. No appeal received. No redundancy expected. Relocates to FHQ, Chelmsford on 15/06/21.

Two business cases launched in March 2021:

> **Stansted Business case** - consultation launched 04/03/21 in relation to reduction in budget from Manchester Airport Group, proposed reduction of 4.35 established posts from the airport and a reduction in policing head count. Eighteen police staff and fifteen officers impacted by the proposal. Potential redundancy situation if staff cannot be redeployed within the force. consultation is due to close on 02/04/21.

> **Firearms, Shotguns and Explosive Licensing (FSEL) Business Case** - consultation to restructure the roles within FSEL. A total of 29 Police staff are affected by the proposals. There is the potential for members of staff to be made redundant from proposals, although there are opportunities within the business case with protected salaries. Consultation launched 08/03/21 with consultation due to close on 07/04/21.

## Specials

### Headcount and Duty Hours

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, there were 527 specials in post on SAP, which is an increase of 8 when compared to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (519) and represents a marginal increase when compared to the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (521).

Since the last HR update as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, the total duty hours worked has increased month on month from 17,773 in January 2021 to 19,428 in March 2021. The total duty hours worked of 19,428 in March 2021 is the highest since May 2020 (21,954).

The total duty hours worked for the 2020/21 financial year of 214,510 is significantly higher than 2019/20 (196,061) as is the average hours worked per person (31.56 increasing to 34.99). The total duty hours worked in March 2021 was 19,428 which is the equivalent of 1214 specials working a 16-hour month.

### **Recruitment and Applications**

In 2020/21 a total of 154 special constables have joined the force, however given the challenges faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic this is only 20 less than the number recruited in 2019/20 (170).

It should be noted the aspiration is to achieve a total headcount of 600 specials by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, however there are a number of factors that may impact the ability to achieve this:

- The exit of specials who joined during COVID-19 'lockdown' such as university students and individuals who had been furloughed.
- Reduced training capacity to ensure COVID-19 secure classes
- Increased conversion rate of specials joining to become an officer (further details below).

However, positively, application numbers remain strong which can be evidenced by the latest data. For the week commencing 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021, there were 20 applications which is 11 more than the previous week and represents the highest number of applications in a single week since week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (28). In addition, there are 16 courses planned for 2021/22 which has capacity to train up to 226 specials.

Regular meetings are scheduled between the Specials Development Team, HR and Corporate Communications with the April 2021 meeting looking to finalise enhanced media support for recruitment campaigns to ensure application numbers remain strong.

### **Turnover**

Specials turnover for 2020/21 was 23.85% (headcount of 125) which is a reduction when compared to 2019/20 (164 / 31.57%).

With regards to specials leaving to join as an officer, a total of 31 specials left in 2020/21 which equates to 24.80% of total leavers. Whilst this is lower than the position in 2019/20 (75 / 40.54%) there are early signs this is starting to increase as 8 of the 14 leavers in March 2021 left to join as an officer (57.14%).

### **Ethnicity & Gender**

The proportion of ethnic minority specials as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 was 6.64% (headcount of 35) which is a reduction when compared to the last HR update as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (39 / 7.51%) and lower than the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (36 / 6.91%).

With regards to the number of female specials this has increased from 31.79% (headcount of 165) as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021, to 32.45% (headcount of 171). This is also a marginal increase when compared to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 (167 / 32.05%).

### All Employee Groups Diversity Data

The following table provides a breakdown of the protected characteristics data for the officers, staff, PCSOs and specials for the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This data has been compared against the latest HR update as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021:

Diversity Category	Employee Group	31st March 21 Position		31st January 2021 Position		31st March 21 Position	
		No. Declaring	% of Total Heacount	No. Declaring	% of Total Heacount	31/03/21 v 31/03/20 No. Variance	31/03/21 v 31/03/20 % Variance
Gender (self-declared)	Officers	3	0.09%	2	0.06%	1	0.03%
	Staff	2	0.09%	0	0.00%	2	0.09%
	PCSOs	0	0.00%	1	0.91%	-1	-0.91%
	Specials	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Religion	Officers	751	21.52%	694	20.14%	57	1.38%
	Staff	648	27.70%	597	25.92%	51	1.78%
	PCSOs	27	24.55%	26	23.64%	1	0.91%
	Specials	151	28.65%	151	29.09%	0	-0.44%
Sexuality	Officers	139	3.98%	127	3.69%	12	0.30%
	Staff	68	2.91%	59	2.56%	9	0.35%
	PCSOs	4	3.64%	4	3.64%	0	0.00%
	Specials	21	3.98%	23	4.43%	-2	-0.45%
Disability	Officers	171	4.90%	140	4.06%	31	0.84%
	Staff	186	7.95%	174	7.56%	12	0.40%
	PCSOs	9	8.18%	8	7.27%	1	0.91%
	Specials	1	0.19%	2	0.39%	-1	-0.20%
Nationality	Officers	36	1.03%	30	0.87%	6	0.16%
	Staff	40	1.71%	39	1.69%	1	0.02%
	PCSOs	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	Specials	21	3.98%	21	4.05%	0	-0.06%
Marital Status	Officers	1277	36.59%	1287	37.35%	-10	-0.76%
	Staff	946	40.44%	950	41.25%	-4	-0.81%
	PCSOs	59	53.64%	59	53.64%	0	0.00%
	Specials	42	7.97%	43	8.29%	-1	-0.32%
Age Grouping (31/03/2021)	Officers:	18-24: 12.18% 25-39: 50.03% 40-54: 36.13% 55+: 1.69%					
	Staff	18-24: 5.30% 25-39: 33.39% 40-54: 35.23% 55+: 26.08%					
	PCSOs	18-24: 1.82% 25-39: 30.00% 40-54: 43.64% 55+: 24.55%					
	Specials	18-24: 29.79% 25-39: 43.35% 40-54: 20.30% 55+: 5.31%					

The table demonstrates that there has been a significant increase in the number of employees declaring a protected characteristic across most categories. This increase can be mostly attributed to a recent force wide communications plan as a result of the national change in diversity reporting.

The force has encouraged staff to update personal diversity information on SAP self-services which was communicated via the Chief Constables blog and through diversity, equality and inclusion webinar training sessions and local boards. In addition, the diversity tile on SAP where this information is captured was changed to a different colour, so it stood out for staff when logging onto employee self-services.

## **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. This ambition is supported through recruitment, retention and attendance management activities.

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, resulting in the required establishment for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the national uplift being exceeded.

The representation of ethnic minority officers continues to increase and the current proportion of 3.72% 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 (March 2021) at 19,428 which is the equivalent of 1214 specials working a 16-hour month. The force continues to focus on ensuring the special constabulary headcount increases by ensuring that there is increased training availability for candidates in 2021/22 following the reduced training capacity in 2020/21 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **6.2 Demand**

As previously reported Human Resources were provided with 28.00 fte growth posts across a number of departments in 2020/21 to ensure the increased demand on Human Resources services was managed, all of which have been recruited and/or selected for. As a result of this growth, HR (working with other key stakeholders) were able to deliver the growth for year 1 of the national uplift.

It should be noted however, that the demand on HR remains due to the need to effectively resource the force during year 2 and potentially year 3 of the national uplift programme. This includes the overall impact that increased workforce numbers have on the department in terms of the support it provides.

## **6.3 Risks/Mitigation**

Whilst the current situation regarding COVID-19 continues to create a risk for the recruitment of all roles, as previously reported, 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.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to reduced levels of turnover, however, there is a risk that turnover could increase which could impact the delivery of the national uplift. There is flexibility in the recruitment and training plan to account for increases in turnover and this is a position that will be monitored at the monthly recruitment review meeting and through monthly Chief Officer group recruitment and retention updates.

Similarly, absence has reduced significantly to the lowest level seen in a number of years, therefore there is a risk this could increase again in 2021/22. As with turnover, this is something that will be monitored monthly and work will continue by Operational HR and the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) to ensure absence is monitored and actions put in place where applicable.

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

The Chief Constable continues to chair the Corporate Diversity, Equality and Inclusion board. This is now complemented by the 12 local boards that have been established.

The overarching aim of all Local Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Boards is to provide clear local leadership and governance for implementing the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy at a local level. It also ensures the workforce and key stakeholders, including Independent Advisory Group members or relevant leads, can actively participate and bring their perspective. All activity from the local boards is then reported back via the Force level board. A specific local board is in place for HR, L&D and Business Services to ensure many issues covered within this paper can be explored as necessary.

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

Not applicable.

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

Operational Human Resources  
Special Constabulary

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

##### Recruitment and Positive Action

HR Innovation continue to expedite the completion of current workstreams including; the creation of a recruitment ambassador programme within Essex, links with the military through Career Transition Partnership, and the development of the transferee process. With regards to the Essex ambassadors programme, 20 people have been identified and is anticipated this will go live in June 2021.

The Positive Action Team are making good progress with workstreams and have a programme of engagement over the next few months that focusses on the ambition to attract and recruit enhanced proportions of ethnic minority and female candidates.



Activity includes attending various Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and Youth Council meetings to promote the team and its aims and objectives.

Inputs have been delivered to Community Safety Engagement officers, Children & Young People officers, and further inputs are planned for Local Policing Teams. They will be provided with knowledge of the recruitment process, recruitment opportunities and asked to highlight any community events to the Positive Action Team who can consider suitability for attendance. This ensures many across Essex Police are able to confidently promote policing as a career of choice when engaging with the community.

On a wider note, work has also commenced with partners to deliver inputs to educational establishments. These will range from internet safety, knife crime and then building relationships between the community and police, culminating in encouraging young people to consider a career in policing. It is anticipated delivery will commence in June 2021 and as many inputs as possible will be completed before the end of term.

Further Positive Action attraction events have been held to attract female and ethnic minority applicants. Further events to attract diverse applicants to our promotion processes have also been held with success during the recent Superintendent process, whereby 2 external ethnic minority candidates were successful (1 male and 1 female). These 2 officers are now going through the transferee process.

### Absence

The PIU and Operational HR teams continue to review Commands with the highest absence figures and ensure attendance at local AMG meetings to provide advice and support especially on the longer-term absence issues.

Contact Management have been identified as having the highest officer absence and as a result, this Command are currently holding fortnightly AMG meetings to ensure close scrutiny.

With regards to PCSO absence, PIU and Operational HR have held a joint review, which has resulted in a workshop being held for District Inspectors with supporting actions being undertaken as a result.

Peer Reviews of long-term cases are being conducted for best practice and those Commands with higher absence levels are dip checked for compliance in sickness absence contacts, outstanding return to work interviews and outstanding fit notes. All identified areas for improvement are fast tracked to supervisors and managers to address.

### Health Services

Health and Wellbeing virtual wellbeing sessions continue and a total of 123 sessions have now been delivered with 3351 attendees (Essex and Kent). Sessions continue at approximately two-three per week. The library of topics is now at 71 and continues to develop to meet the changing needs as the pandemic continues. In the coming weeks, the team will be supporting Stress Awareness Month (1-30 April) with sessions as an example relating to self-awareness and emotional self-management.

The Wellbeing Steering Group continues to meet monthly and will continue post-pandemic due to the engagement opportunity this provides.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), continues to provide 24/7 assistance via an app and telephone counselling. The support is available to both staff, officers and members of the special constabulary. This support extends to immediate family members at no additional cost to the organisations. This ensures access to support via whichever means an individual prefers and includes articles, podcasts, information sheets and financial support tools. A full year has been completed with this additional support mechanism and due to the benefits provided, will continue into the second year of provision.

## **9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome**

1. Increase the number of specials throughout 2021/22 in line with the aspiration to achieve 600 by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

**Expected Outcome:** for reasons stated earlier in the report, significant progress towards 600 specials may be challenging, however additional training capacity totalling 16 intakes for up to 226 candidates has been scheduled for the 2021/22 financial year and recruitment marketing will continue to focus on this area.

2. Continue to increase ethnic minority and female officer representation throughout 2021/22.

**Expected Outcome:** as reported, the current proportion of ethnic minority and female officers is the highest level it has been over the last 6 years and with strong numbers of candidates currently in process. Progress throughout 2021/22 is expected, however the #WeValueDifference campaign and outreach and support from the Positive Action Team will continue as a core activity.