



Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Annual Report 2021/22

This report sets out the steps taken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex between April 2021 and March 2022 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 2021

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 through the Strategic Independent Advisory Group and Young Essex Assembly. 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 were reviewed in April 2021 and the decision was taken to split the first objective to better reflect the legal position and specific scrutiny role undertaken by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner in regard to Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service. The strategy will be reviewed again in 2023, 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 at <https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/>

1. Governance

- Scrutinise the work of Essex Police against its obligations in the Equality Act 2010 and its own equality objectives. This will include a focus on Stop and Search activity and involve direct scrutiny and scrutiny through our membership of partnerships boards such as Health and Wellbeing Boards and Safer Essex (the countywide strategy group in respect of community safety).
 - Through our Performance and Resources Board undertake a twice-yearly in-depth scrutiny session on the performance of the service and how it is delivering against its Public Sector Equality Duty. The notes from these sessions will be published and accessible to the public.
 - Actively participate in the force's own internal governance arrangements.
- Scrutinise the work of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service (ECFRS) against its obligations in the Equality Act 2010 and its own equality objectives. This will include performance against the external benchmarking.
 - Develop a broad scrutiny programme to ensure effective scrutiny of ECFRS work in the area including, but not limited to, twice yearly in-depth scrutiny sessions at the Performance and Resource Board focused on the performance of the service and how it is delivering against the Public Sector Equality Duty. Ensure that the notes from these are published and accessible to the public.

2. 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 into 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.

3. 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.

4. 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, SECURITY, AND TRANSPARENCY

Essex Police

Following the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner election on 5th May 2021 the Commissioner developed the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024. The plan built on the Police and Crime Plan 2020-2021 and set out 12 priorities for policing.

The Plan has equality, diversity and inclusion woven throughout it and focuses heavily on the importance of building strong relationships and participation between all communities and people in Essex and their police force. The Plan also includes specific commitments to reducing drug driven violence, protecting vulnerable people and breaking the cycle of domestic violence, reducing violence against women and girls, protecting rural and isolated areas, encouraging volunteers and community support, and supporting our officers and staff.

Within these priorities there are various specific commitments which directly relate to the Commissioner's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. These include commitments to:

- "Recognise and welcome the increased diversity of Essex and invest in ways to work together with all communities to prevent crime by encouraging reporting, identifying problem areas and targeting prevention activity" (from the "Further investment in crime prevention" priority).
- "Provide extra support and early intervention for people with additional needs or who are at increased risk" (from the "Improving support for victims of crime" priority).
- "Give young people a voice and work with them to understand the particular risks and challenges they face and use this insight to develop how Essex Police and Partners work with to prevent and tackle crime" (from the "Encouraging volunteers and community support" priority).
- "Foster a supportive culture within Essex Police and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's office with an increase in diversity and an inclusive recruitment and development strategy so that people from all segments of our community can aspire to serve the public through these services" (from the "Supporting our officers and staff" priority).

The Plan also includes specific mention of the Commissioner's Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality and Diversity Objectives they have committed to.

The PFCC has also specifically exercised oversight of the implementation of the force's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy including a member of their team participating in the force's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Board.

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 has successfully attracted a more diverse work force through its "We Value Difference" recruitment campaign. Of the total 372 joiners for the 2021/22 financial year, 27 (7.26%) were from an ethnic minority background. The total proportion of

7.26% is lower than the proportion of ethnic minority joiners in the full 2020/21 financial year (9.42%) but higher than in 2019/20 (6.67%). It is also higher than the economically active population of Essex (6.56%). The new ethnic minority joiners have contributed towards the force level representation increasing to 152 (4.17%) as at 31st March 2022. This is an increase when compared to the position as at 31st March 2021 (3.72%). The current proportion of 4.17% is now only 2.39 percentage points under the economically active population of Essex (6.56%).

Out of the 372 joiners this financial year (2021/22), 166 (44.62%) were female. The current proportion of female joiners in the financial year (44.62%) is higher than any proportion of female officer joiners over the previous 11 financial years (from 2009/10 to 2020/21). Total female officers have increased to a headcount of 1,306 as at 31st March 2022, which equates to 35.84% of the total number of officers and is higher than any previously recorded end of financial year position.

With regards to police staff, the ethnic minority representation has increased slightly from 103 as at 31st December 2021 to 105 as at 31st March 2022. As a proportion of the total staff workforce (excluding PCSOs) this is a percentage point increase of 0.07% from 4.41% to 4.48%. With regards to gender, the number of female staff has also increased slightly from 1,534 as at 31st December 2021 to 1,537 as at 31st March 2022, but as a proportion has reduced marginally from 65.75% to 65.63%.

With regards to PCSOs, the ethnic minority headcount has remained the same at 1, but due to the lower overall PCSO headcount the proportion has increased from 0.91% to 0.97%. The number of female PCSOs has reduced to 65 as at 31st March 2022 from 67 as at 31st December 2022 but the proportion has increased from 60.91% to 63.11%.

The number of ethnic minority Specials has reduced by 1 from 29 to 28, however as a proportion it has increased from 5.88% to 6.02% which is due to the overall lower headcount of Specials. It is worth noting that the Special Constabulary remains the employee group with the highest proportion of ethnic minorities.

With regards to the number of female Specials, the headcount has reduced by 16 from 175 as at 31st December 2021 to 159 as at 31st March 2022. As a result of this (and the overall lower numbers of Specials) this has resulted in the proportion of Specials who are female reducing from 35.50% as at 31st December 2021 to 34.19% as at 31st March 2022.

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 ensuring the PFCC fulfils their own obligations in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty and EDI objectives.

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's report, this scrutiny compares the deployment of these tactics relative to 2011 Census data; the recorded reasons for the use of such tactics, and the proportion of stop and searches that did not have reasonable grounds. Despite this ongoing scrutiny, public confidence that stop and search is being used fairly has dropped by 8%. This reduction is the same for both white and BAME respondents and may be linked to national issues.

Confidence in the use of stop and search has fallen from 78% to 70% and the gap between white and ethnic minority respondents when asked if they expected to be treated fairly if they made a complaint has increased with 60% of ethnic minorities and 75% of white respondents providing a positive response during this reporting period compared to 74% and 84% in 2020-2021.

The gap in overall confidence has also widened slightly with 76% of ethnic minorities and 79% of white respondents thinking that Essex Police are doing a good or excellent job.

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. 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 are most likely (84%) to think Essex Police are doing a good or excellent job.
- Those identifying as white are more likely (80% compared to 77%) to believe Essex Police are doing a good or excellent job than those identifying as BAME. However, this gap has significantly narrowed and there is now only a 3% difference between these two groups.
- Across the board, all groups have shown a similar significant increase in confidence in Essex Police since quarter 4 2019/20.
- Victims of crime remain the group least likely (61%) to believe Essex Police is doing a good or excellent job.
- Ethnic minorities (60%) and victims of crime (63%) are least likely to think they will be treated fairly if they made a complaint about the police. These gaps have grown since last year compared to white residents or people who haven't been the victim of crime.
- Ethnic minorities (7% compared to 5%) and victims of crime (8% compared to 4%) continue to be more likely to be stopped and searched by Essex Police. These groups

are also the least likely to believe the Police use their stop and search powers fairly. With 62% of ethnic minorities compared to 76% of white residents believing they are used fairly, and 66% of victims compared to 76% of non-victims.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

As the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (PFCCFRA), the PFCC also provides in-depth scrutiny of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's delivery against its equality objectives.

The Service's current objectives are:

1. To improve the recruitment, retention, progression, development, and experience of the people employed by Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to enable the organisation to become an inclusive employer of choice.
2. To promote and encourage employees to voluntarily declare their self-classification diversity data to ensure ECFRS's actions as an employer are evidence led and improvement focused.
3. To improve the mapping, quality, and extent of equality information in order to better facilitate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty in relation to service delivery including IRMP additional activities.
4. To review the equality impact of key organisational policies for differential impact in areas such as recruitment and selection, learning and development, absence management, modified duties, talent management, appraisal, disciplinary and grievances.
5. To ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect and have a workplace that is free from harassment and bullying by changing the culture of the organisation to one that is genuinely inclusive. All employees are high performing because we value their differences, which includes gender or gender identity, race, or religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, caring responsibilities, or membership of a trade union.
6. To seek external review, challenge, and accreditation of ECFRS's actions as an employer by actively participating with relevant equalities standards and benchmarks including the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework.

The PFCC exercises this scrutiny through their Performance and Resource Board and Strategic Board, which receive a range of detailed information including a mid-year update on progress against the Service's EDI objectives, which was scrutinised at the PFCC's Performance and Resource Board on 28th June, and the Equality Annual Report which was scrutinised by the PFCC at the Strategic Board on 10th March 2022. Through these reports it is clear that Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has put in place significant initiatives to drive increased diversity in its recruitment, retention and progression activity. These initiatives include opportunities for women and potential applicants who identify as BAME to gain a better understanding of what it means to be a firefighter through a range of experience days. In 2021, the Service also worked with J S Associates to conduct a review

and make recommendations to improve further the way that it attracts and recruits. The review team was joined by representatives of ECFRS’s recruitment and inclusion and diversity teams and our employee networks to identify recommendations for us to action and embed.

Since March 2021 the Service has seen small increases in the number of wholetime (7.1% compared to 6.8%) and on-call firefighters (3.4% compared to 3%) who are female. It has also seen significant increases in the number of wholetime (9.3% compared to 2.4%) and on-call (4.4% compared to 1.4%) firefighters identifying as non-white. This includes people from ethnic backgrounds and those who prefer not to say.

This progress is clearer when looking at the progress being made with new joiners with 16.2% of new wholetime firefighters and 7.5% of on-call firefighters being women. It is also encouraging that 7.5% of new whole-time firefighters have identified as non-white. The same increase is not however being shown in those successfully joining as on-call firefighters where only 0.9% identified as non-white.

The Service has undertaken a wide range of positive action and this has proven to be effective in helping a more diverse range of people join the service. These interventions were reviewed in April 2021 and shown to be effective with regular scrutiny since. The table below gives a snapshot of the impact of these interventions and support provides through the process.

Characteristic	Applicants	Active	Offers made
Women	380 (11%)	179 (12%)	5 (19%)
BAME	244 (7%)	104 (7%)	3 (11%)
Under 21	170 (5%)	86 (6%)	0 (0%)
Age 21-30	729 (21%)	405 (27%)	10 (37%)
On Call	132 (4%)	47 (3%)	9 (33%)
Total	3441	1508	27

The Service was also successful in gaining its Bronze accreditation from Inclusive Employers in April 2022. The overall feedback provided good research and external validation of the strong progress the service is making. In particular the feedback highlighted:

- Good progress in establishing its Inclusion and Diversity programme with some strong examples of best practice.
- Significant improvement in diversity disclosure rates across a range of categories.
- Employees that feel empowered to drive inclusion activity and formal mechanisms in place to recognise this contribution.
- The approach that has been taken to attract individuals from under-represented target groups through the recruitment process where existing selection processes have been modified and a variety of innovative attraction strategies employed.

The Service has also welcomed several interns via the [Leonard Cheshire Change 100 programme](#) that provides opportunities for graduates with a disability or long-term health condition. The Service also sponsored two staff members from diverse backgrounds through the “Leading Greater Essex” development programme.

Through its staff networks, training opportunities have been provided on Neurodiversity, Inclusive Leadership, Biases and Blind spots for our selection interview assessors, People Impact Assessments, an Embracing Difference Together Conference hosted by Kent Fire and Rescue Service, webinars throughout the year hosted by Inclusive Employers, Lunch and Learn sessions hosted by the NFCC and a range of podcasts created by the NFCC.

The PFCC has also 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 data; 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.

Throughout the year, the PFCC also continued to scrutinise progress in delivering the PFCCFRA’s People Strategy which includes work to increase the diversity of the Service’s workforce. This, taken alongside the twice-yearly scrutiny of the service’s delivery against its Public Sector Equality Objectives, provides an interesting insight into the strategic intent of the service in terms of workforce diversity, engagement with diverse communities and the progress it is making against its equality objectives.

During 2021/22, 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.

ENGAGEMENT

Following the delayed PFCC election in May 2021, work started to develop a new Police and Crime Plan as required in statute. This development work formed the core of our engagement work for the first six months of the term. The engagement plan to achieve this development process was set out within a paper tabled at the Strategic Board on 10th June 2021. This included a list of all identified stakeholders, the level of engagement we would aim to achieve with them and our approach to gaining this input. This included a variety of public meetings, public surveys and specialist tailored activity for groups with protected characteristics or who we find harder to hear from. [This paper was published on the Police Fire and Crime Panel’s website.](#)

Engagement through the development process included:

- Workshop discussions with over 100 partner organisations including local councils, charities, support groups, advisory groups and interest groups.
- Targeted workshops with BAME communities, and representatives from disability groups and young people.
- Feedback from victim support groups
- A range of feedback following presentations at multi agency groups and special interest groups such as Safer Essex, Essex Partners, Basildon Diversity Forum and disability advisory groups.
- Feedback obtained through the public survey
- Feedback obtained through the Youth Voice project undertaken by the Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

In total over 1,000 people were involved in conversations around the Police and Crime Plan with a further 1,500 people participating in the public survey.

A full written report on the development process was tabled at the Strategic Board on 27th September 2022 with a follow up report provided to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel for Essex on 21st October 2021. A completed Equality Impact Assessment along with the full engagement report and youth voice project report was also published alongside the Plan showing the range of groups engaged and the strategies used to reach these groups. These are publicly available via the following link: [Meetings and Events \(essex.gov.uk\)](https://www.essex.gov.uk/meetings-and-events)

As part of our work to tackle Drug Driven Violence, we commissioned, through the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit, Essex Council for Voluntary Service to undertake and coordinate a Youth Voices project. Youth leaders across Essex, Southend and Thurrock engaged with over 600 young people on the violence and vulnerability themes for 2020. The feedback from young people was exceptional and helped the violence and vulnerability team to prioritise issues that young people felt were important. It also led to a detached youth workers being placed in 5 local districts as set out below in the commissioned services section of this report.

The project was repeated in 2021 and our listening project took place in communities with residents and also with youth groups. The project enabled over 600 children, young people and adults to input into the Violence and vulnerabilities strategic priorities and spending for 2021-2022 [read the report here](#)

Since the development of the plan, the PFCC has developed a comprehensive three-year Communications and Engagement Strategy including an engagement plan to set out the focus for engagement over the coming term. This includes a specific commitment to hear from and reach all of the people in Essex and the commissioning of research to better

understand the relationship between awareness of the PFCC and confidence in policing that can provide useful insight into variations of perceptions dependent on respondents protected characteristics. The strategy has been published in full on the website and is available via the link below:

<https://www.essex.pfcc.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Communications-and-Engagement-Strategy-2021-2024.pdf>

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.

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. Members of the Senior Management Team also participated in the Essex Police Leading Equality Diversity and Inclusion training and others attended training and briefings on race disparity in policing organised by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

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 Integrated Risk Management Plan, Digital Strategy and the Prevention Strategy as well as the partnership Crime Prevention Strategy.

SERVICE DELIVERY

During 2021/22, the PFCC and their team continued to play 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), the Sexual Abuse Strategic Partnership (SASP), the Equalities Network and the Faith Covenant Steering Group.

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.

Protecting those at greatest risk and reducing the number who become victims of crime is essential to driving down the level of harm in our communities. Domestic abuse accounts for 33% of all violent crime in Essex and, in 2021-2022 24,284 cases of violence against the person related to domestic abuse were recorded. This is an increase of 5.4%. These crimes account for a huge volume of the vulnerable people who become victims of crimes committed against them by partners or other family members and as such breaking the cycle of domestic abuse is an important focus to reduce vulnerability in Essex.

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse

In Essex, our work to tackle domestic abuse is co-ordinated by the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB). The Board is chaired by Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Jane Gardner, and works with partners to enable everyone to live a life free from all forms of domestic abuse. The Board has a comprehensive strategy, which was refreshed during 2021-2022 to provide a sharper focus following publication of further detail about the Domestic Abuse Act. The SETDAB strategy focuses on achieving five outcomes:

1. Children and young people can recognise and form healthy relationships.
2. People experiencing and at risk of experiencing domestic abuse are supported to be and feel safe.
3. Everyone can rebuild their lives and live free from domestic abuse.
4. Supporting and disrupting perpetrators to change their behaviour and break the cycle of domestic abuse.
5. Communities, professionals, and employers are able to recognise domestic abuse at the earliest opportunity and have the confidence to take action.

The Commissioner, along with SETDAB partners, commissions a range of services to support victims, from Victim Support which offers the first line of support to more specialist services such as Next Chapter, Safe Steps and Changing Pathways which is co-commissioned with Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council. These services deliver an integrated domestic abuse support service including refuges, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and community-based support. These co-commissioned services include the delivery of a seven-days-a-week, single point of access, the Compass helpline, which delivers advice and support for victims and professionals. The Synergy Rape Crisis Partnership, a service for victims of rape and sexual abuse including historic child sexual abuse, is also commissioned 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.

Significant additional Police officers have been invested in our response to domestic abuse over the last few years, including the development of new Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams. These new teams work alongside the established Domestic Abuse Investigations Teams to manage the most prolific domestic abuse perpetrators and the most vulnerable victims. The team is focused on working with these individuals in a sustained way to identify ways to resolve recurring incidents to prevent future harm and reduce repeat victimisation.

The work of these Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Teams complements a number of perpetrator behaviour change programmes commissioned by the Commissioner. These are designed 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 more than 280 referrals in the last year and has delivered a 95% reduction in physical violence. This is important work and is vital to driving down the number of people affected by domestic abuse in our county.

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse requires changes throughout society and this broad partnership work has been evident throughout the year. The PFCC has worked with partners across Essex to raise awareness of domestic violence and encourage victims to come forward and seek help. Linking activity into White Ribbon Day on 25th of November 2021, 16 days of actions were co-ordinated across the country where partners showed their support for eradicating violence against women. This gained significant positive publicity, building awareness of the support available and promoting reporting. This work is an important element of building understanding and cohesion between people with different protected characteristics, in this case gender.

This work, to prevent domestic abuse and build understanding between people of different genders continued in January when the Commissioner contracted the Essex Chambers of Commerce to host a conference for businesses on domestic abuse and what they can do to help support members of their staff who are affected and most importantly prevent it happening in the first place. More than 100 businesses were represented and further events to follow up on the theme have been planned in the coming 12 months.

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of domestic abuse to resolve are challenges around housing and how the provision of housing can help victims take the step to end abusive relationships. This has been a significant area of focus for SETDAB over the year, with local agreements being established to provide better support for victims.

Violence against women and girls

A significant area of focus during 2021-2022 has been on reducing violence against women and girls. No women should feel afraid in their own community or be scared to go out, but the sad truth is that many women and girls do. That is not acceptable, and it is important for us as a society to change that. Over the last year, since the horrific murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021, the Commissioner has spent time listening to women and girls, the

organisations that support victims of male violence against women and working with partners such as Essex County Council to get a much better understanding of how women and girls feel in different areas and places across Essex.

Following these conversations, the Commissioner made a clear commitment in the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 to support a cultural change within society and provide strong, consistent, and vocal support for the safety of women and girls, whether they report crimes against them or not. Over the last year, working with council partners, education providers and local communities, the Commissioner has identified several areas where women and girls feel unsafe and successfully secured additional government funding, through the Safer Streets fund, to improve them. The latest area of focus is in Chelmsford, where the Commissioner secured £550,000. This funding is being used to improve street lighting and fencing, encourage local volunteering to manage the surrounding landscaping, fund a university student-based initiative to create community solutions to safety concerns, run a series of community safety days, fund youth engagement in the area and develop a digital engagement programme. Other activities involve engagement with schools, football clubs and theatre groups to generate a conversation about safety and actions and what we can all do to help spaces feel and be safer for everybody.

Through the collaboration programme, the Commissioner has also been heavily involved in Project Minerva. This is an innovative partnership approach to using police data to identify streets and local areas where women are more at risk. This data has been collected and used to identify these crime hotspots and allow local services, including the police to direct their resources accordingly. Most importantly this also informs the prevention activity that services can undertake.

Notwithstanding the huge amount of work that is currently under way to support victims and make our spaces and places safer for women and girls, the level of violence against women and girls is increasing while the level of successful prosecutions is still woefully inadequate. While COVID-19 lockdowns have made the trends in the year-on-year data hard to analyse there has been a 12.2% increase in violence against the person incidents committed against women when you compare the year to March 2020 (before the pandemic impacted statistics) and the 12 months to March 2022. Over the same period, there was a 27.5% increase in the number of sexual offences committed against females. While this pattern is one that is being experienced across the country, it is not acceptable, and it is an area that will need significant focus in future years to reverse this trend.

While we are working hard to prevent crime and reduce the number of people who suffer the impact of crime, where somebody becomes the victim of crime, it is important that they receive the support they need to recover. As well as the vital support offered through Essex Police in the form of updates and support from officers investigating cases and working directly with those affected, the Commissioner also commissions a range of general and specialist services to help victims to cope and recover.

For the last few years, Victim Support has delivered the general support service provided to all victims of crime in Essex. It receives around 10,000 referrals per quarter, of which

between 1,500 and 2,000 choose to engage directly. This service continues to make a significant difference to those who choose to engage, with more than 70% of victims showing clear signs of being better able to cope, feeling safer and being more informed after receiving support.

For victims of sexual offences, the Commissioner engages Synergy to provide Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Community Support. Over the last year, this service has seen a significant increase in demand with the number of new victims increasing from 750 in quarter 1 of 2020-2021 to 1,047 over the same period in 2021-2022. Thanks to the dedication of the team at Synergy, the positive impact of the service on victims has been maintained even under this extra demand with well over 90% of victims showing improved signs of being able to cope, communicate their needs effectively and feeling safer.

The Commissioner also provides funding for Compass who run a 24/7-hour domestic abuse helpline and Changing Pathways and Next Chapter who provide Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, community outreach and refuge. All three services are provided in partnership with Essex County Council and other partners and form part of the strong and countywide response to domestic abuse set out in the section above and overseen by the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board.

During the year, the Commissioner was successful in securing £832,863 to invest in Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Abuse Advisors (ISVAs). This funding has allowed these services to expand their delivery and provide a positive response to the impact of COVID-19. This funding from the National ISVA and IDVA Fund and Critical Support Fund was shared between Victim Support, domestic abuse charities Changing Pathways and Next Chapter, and the consortium of rape and sexual abuse specialist support services, Synergy Essex. The funding meant that two additional caseworkers could be recruited at Victim Support to work with standard and medium risk victims of domestic abuse, providing telephone and face-to-face support. At Changing Pathways, the money was invested in five specialist domestic abuse advocates, including expanding the service to include an advisor for young people, while Synergy used the additional funding to increase capacity for Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs).

For many victims, having professionally mediated communication with the perpetrator of the crime that affected them is a positive way to help them to cope and recover. For perpetrators, this can also offer a life-changing experience as they come face-to-face with the people their actions have impacted and feel the emotional cost of their actions. The Essex Restorative and Mediation Service, which is delivered by the Commissioner's team, has made a significant difference to victims and perpetrators. During 2021-22, it received 368 referrals, an increase of 24% compared to the year before. 16% (57) of cases resulted in all parties communicating either face-to-face or indirectly. In total, the service contacted 532 victims and 253 perpetrators. 74% of referrals were from Essex Police, 14% from councils or housing agencies, 7% from probation (the majority being Victim Liaison Officer referrals), 3% from Youth Services and 2% were self-referrals.

Throughout the year, the service has continued to grow its involvement with domestic abuse cases, having opened the service to domestic abuse victims in 2020-2021. Over the

year, domestic abuse referrals increased from 14 to 38 (171% increase) and hate crime referrals increased from 22 to 24 (9% increase).

The service continues to receive positive feedback, with 73% of people who provided feedback saying that the process had a positive impact on them and 89% saying they were satisfied with the service they received. All of the perpetrators who provided feedback said they would behave differently going forward. The Essex Restorative and Mediation Service was also shortlisted for Team of the Year at the Essex Police Awards.

Race at Work Charter

During the year the Commissioner and Essex Police also both signed up to the Race at Work Charter. This provided a visible statement of the Commissioner's intent to provide equality of opportunity in the workplace in line with the Commissioner's Public Sector Equality Duty and their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

The Commissioner's commitment at the same time as the commitment by the Chief Constable on behalf of Essex Police provided a strong and clear shared commitment to provide equality of opportunity, generated positive publicity and helped to position Essex Police and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's office as favoured employers.

By signing the Charter, the Commissioner made the following commitments and undertook the following actions to fulfil those commitments:

Appoint an Executive Sponsor for race - The Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement was appointed by the Commissioner to provide visible leadership on race and ethnicity.

Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress – Ethnicity data is published on the Commissioner's website, as well as that of Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service through the scrutiny programme.

Commit at Board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying – The Commissioner made this commitment through signing the Charter as set out in the [Decision Report](#).

Make it clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers – This is delivered through the Senior Management Team's participation in the Essex Police EDI Leadership Training and the development of the Commissioner's EDI Strategy and delivery against that Strategy.

Take action that supports ethnic minority career progression – Action to deliver this commitment is embedded in our Personal Development Programme and the increased allocation of funding this year to support development and progression of the Commissioner's staff.

Recruitment of Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive

During the reporting period we also recruited a new Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, who took up post in January 2022. Significant effort was made to publicise and encourage applications from a wide range of people including those with a protected characteristic.

The advert attracted a diverse range of candidates, both male and female, nationally and internationally. Applicants were from a wide range of ages and a third declared their ethnic origin to be other than White British. The service's employee networks participated in the recruitment and selection process and candidates were questioned about their approach to the EDI agenda as part of the formal interview process.

Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System Research

During the year the Commissioner and Essex Police, through the Criminal Justice Board and Reducing Reoffending Board, contracted Anglia Ruskin University to undertake a research project into B.A.M.E disproportionality within the Essex local criminal justice system. This research considered whether disproportionality is something which is caused by, and should be addressed directly by, criminal justice agencies, or whether there are other underlying / external factors that influence lives and behaviour at an earlier juncture that lead to disproportionality within the CJS.

The research has taken a phased approach that followed the sequential steps of the CJS over a 12-month period (01/11/2019 to 31/10/2020). The full phases are set out below with results from the complete research project due to be available in September 2022.

- Phase 1 focused on police stop and search and arrests (complete)
- Phase 2a focuses on Magistrates' Court outcomes
- Phase 2b focuses on Crown Court outcomes
- Phases 3 focuses on prison outcomes
- Phase 4 focuses on probation outcomes

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 funding.

During the last year we can tell that 10% of people who accessed the services we commission to support victims of sexual violence were from ethnic minorities, 10% were male and 1.3% identified as transgender. Interestingly 55% of people identified as having a disability.

In the case of people who have accessed our domestic abuse commissioned services, 5% were from ethnic minorities, 15% were men and 9.1% had a disability.

The data produced is detailed and in general provides reassurance that our commissioned services are providing for a wide range of people with protected characteristics in Essex. This is less clear regarding our general victims support service where, because of a lack of disclosure, it is not possible with any certainty to be confident in the protected characteristics that the service reaches. More will be done over the remaining period of this contract to secure a better insight into who is accessing this service.

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:

AFI UK African families in UK - £19,500

Youth work in youth settings across Colchester and Tendring, looking at wellbeing, parenting, linking with other provision / positive activities and raising cultural awareness. Offering positive diversionary activities while addressing the issues that are impacting on the young people and providing them with safe spaces to explore and discuss. Linking with community leaders from a range of backgrounds (including the Colchester Nepalese Society, Bangladeshi Women's Association Essex, the Colchester Chinese Culture Society, and the Colchester Malayalee Community) to engage a wide range of young people and identify youth settings to include in the youth work.

ATF (Action Through Football) - £19,100

Work with young people in an area of Basildon, running sessions within the community, the project includes access to an NHS trained counsellor that provides instant access to support at crisis point and indoor/ outdoor safe spaces (linked to the local primary and secondary schools). Developed in response to a request from Basildon Community Safety Partnership.

Building Lives Project - £20,000

Provides 1:1 coaching and mentoring to children and young people aged between 9-18 years old, at risk of or involved in serious violence.

CARA Essex - £20,000

To increase the counselling and therapeutic support provided to young people (aged 12-19) who have been victims of sexual violence through a specialist young person's practitioner working on a one-to-one basis with up to 15 young people at any one time.

Changing Lives, Harlow - £20,000

To support the development of the Community Hub for young people to feel safe and have access to sports activities.

Colchester Utd - £13,750

Working with schools and youth clubs in Clacton, Jaywick, Shrub End and Greenstead. Creating a new workshop package for schools and youth clubs in the areas focusing on reducing crime and increasing awareness of the exploitation of young people. The programme also provides an avenue for young people to gain work experience through volunteering opportunities with the organisation and the football club. Using the brand of

the football club to shape career pathways for participants of the workshops, with the long-term goal of creating new employees of the football club.

Doddinghurst Road Church, Brentwood - £20,000

To support the funding of a detached youth worker (funding being sought from other sources to sustain for three years), working to build relationships with disadvantaged young people most at risk of exploitation, including through pre-existing work, for example Brentwood Foodbank. Developing new projects that promote greater communication and positive engagement between the police, youth groups and schools.

Inclusion Ventures - £19,500

Working with young people in their communities in Jaywick and West Clacton. To include supporting individual young people in the steps back into employment or education; working closely with Police Children and Young People Officers in the provision of activities; weekly night cafe for the older young people exposed to drug culture and the violence that arises around it; and respond to young people's suggestions for diversionary activities.

Kids Inspire Healing Connections – £20,000

Early help therapeutic services for children and young people who are at increased risk of engaging in violence/ crime. With referrals from health, social care, police and education sectors. Support sessions delivered by qualified, accredited therapists.

Maldon CVS - £19,920

The Maldon Power of Gaming project supports young people to build social connections and confidence through gaming. The project is aimed at 13 – 19 year olds with sessions in a social environment (online and in person) with sessional workers who are there to help the young people feel comfortable. Power of Gaming was a project set up by a local computer business in 2019 though stopped due to Covid. Lessons learnt from this earlier work were captured and plans put in place to build on these.

Motivated Minds - £19,570

Working with the communities of Basildon to raise awareness of the "HAPPY Hub" as a safe space for young people; dedicated youth club sessions for children and young people, and workshops for young people on staying physically safe and positive relationships. Along with building partnerships with police and other professionals to use the space for delivery of talks to young people and parents.

Open Door Developing Social Isolation Project (Thurrock) - £20,000

The project is aimed at care leavers, 16-21 year olds living in Thurrock, and provides regular group meetings which involve a structured programme of support including independent living skills, social activities, guidance and support about keeping safe, healthy and unhealthy relationships, looking after their mental health and community volunteering, as well as help with budgeting, employment and training opportunities. The project aims to help young people build new networks within their own communities as well as new networks amongst group members. Mentoring supports those young people who find group activities more of a challenge.

Outhouse East - £12,615

Support and access to specialist counselling for those vulnerable or at risk, with a focus on LGBTQ+ young people, whose experiences are often impacted because of their sexuality or gender. The work includes drop-in services in schools to reach out to young people, as well as raising awareness of support organisations and services.

Scouts - £20,000

For a Growth and Development Officer for 15 hours per week for 15 months to support Essex Scouts in its growth and development of new provision in areas of need, so more young people at risk within communities can access scouting and its activities. The work includes recruitment and support of local adults, Young Leaders (14-18); reaching out and providing taster sessions for young people and adults in communities in need of provision; offering the 4 Week Challenge to identified communities. Developing high quality, exciting and inspiring activity programmes - where young people can take chances and learn from this in a safe environment.

Southend United - £17,570

Early intervention and early education for children in years 5 and 6 at primary schools in Southend, with a focus on raising awareness and understanding of the dangers of getting involved with drugs and gangs. The project includes improving the awareness and understanding of these issues amongst parents, with a focus on social media. Workshops and events will be delivered in targeted schools. In addition, for a large-scale event at Roots Hall stadium aimed at increasing overall awareness of the project.

Teen Talk Harwich, Tendring - £18,924

Working with 16 –25 year olds and 10-11 year olds (year 6) age ranges. Responding to issues from the 'Youth Voices project'. To revisit the groups which took part in the "Youth Voices project" and develop youth led ideas in response to the issues identified. As part of this, to continue to develop relationships with young people through schools and through detached youth work, creating awareness of existing services and focus on how young people can get involved. Examples of the issues identified include young people in the Tendring area "feel a lack of role models and positive community members that young people can talk to" and "want more community-based activities"

The Children's Society - £20,000

To support the development of an early intervention referral pathway and group work programme for young people who are stopped and searched and are found to be in possession of cannabis (and not covered by current provision). With an offer to the young people referred into the service of a one-to-one assessment to understand their life as they experience it as well as identify barriers to engagement, along with participation in group sessions. For the sessions to focus on and allow the young people to explore associated risks and consequences and the health impacts of cannabis use, physically and mentally; harm reduction methods and ways to stop the use of cannabis, including advice on diversionary activities; peer pressure / grooming behaviours and what forms these can come in.

The Wilderness Foundation - £20,000

Providing wilderness therapy, aspects of counselling along with environment-focused activities, centred around a nature-based experience. To provide intervention programmes for those who have experienced youth / gang violence. The approach includes outdoor activities led by an outdoor facilitator offering training and skills in bush craft techniques, camp craft, outdoor volunteering such as tree planting or conservation; visiting specialist support in areas such as money management, employability training; and an on-site counsellor to provide additional help to individuals in the group, for example to support those who have experienced trauma.

Waltham Abbey Youth 2000 - £10,000

Providing support for young people at King Harold Academy, and sessions at Waltham Abbey Youth 2000 hub, Brooker Road for young people and their families. Working with young people, either through self-referral or from the school, to identify patterns of behaviour and support through counselling. Also providing arts, crafts and mindfulness sessions as part of a Parent Drop-In facility, giving parents the opportunity to socialise with other parents, receive support from their peers and reduce their stress levels.

Canvey Island Yellow Door - £20,000

Working with young people between the ages of 11 and 25. To provide a youth worker to support young people through one-to-one mentoring and supporting the provision of a range of clubs and activities which will provide young people with safe spaces and offer them informal education on a range of issues, including substance misuse, internet safety, criminal exploitation and healthy relationships.

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE STAFF REPRESENTATION

In terms of the Commissioner’s office staff, representation in the office has remained largely static over the year, however because of an overall reduction in staff levels we have seen a slight decrease in the proportion of female staff as a proportion of all 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. Both of these movements are related to the overall reduction in staff.

	01/04/2020	01/04/2021	01/04/2022
Gender			
• Male	15.8%	12.5%	15%
• Female	84.2%	87.5%	85%
• Not stated	-	-	-
Ethnicity			
• BAME	-	4.2%	4.8%
• White Grouped	89.5%	91.7%	95.2%

• Declined to state	10.5%	4.2%	-
Disability			
• No	26.3%	20.8%	33.2%
• Yes	-	4.2%	4.8%
• Not stated	73.7%	75.0%	62%