

Rt Hon Suella Braverman MP
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Your ref: n/a
Our ref: SH
Date: 31 August 2023
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Dear Home Secretary

I write in response to the HMICFRS inspection report: **Police performance, Getting a grip.**

I acknowledge the six recommendations made in this report and understand that three recommendations (listed in appendix A for reference) are applicable to all Forces, including Essex Police.

The Chief Constable has provided a detailed response to me regarding the three recommendations applicable to all Forces and assured me that all have been added to the force's register of HMICFRS recommendations. I am pleased to see that Essex Police is compliant with two recommendations and is working towards compliance with the third, recommendation 6. As recommendation 6 is linked to an AFI in the recent PEEL inspection, some good progress has already been made towards compliance.

It is very pleasing to see four examples in the report which highlight promising practice identified in Essex, as well as two examples of innovative practice, which have all been recognised by HMICFRS. The fact that these include work with young people and with victims, demonstrating positive engagement with the public, is especially good to see.

I chair a monthly Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board, at which performance against my Police and Crime Plan, as well as performance against national measures, is examined and discussed. Performance data gives a helpful insight to the activity and results of the force, enabling us to identify trends over time and make informed decisions. It is important that such data is understood in context and is used appropriately; for example, the changing nature of crime can impact on demand in the same way that volume of crime can. For this reason all performance data is presented with commentary to ensure that it is not misleading to myself or to members of the public. Performance data is also made available to the public through publishing on my website, to ensure transparency.

Our performance data in Essex provides evidence that we are investigating and solving more crime, and that public confidence remains higher than it was in 2019. We invited internal audit of our performance reporting, and this is currently in progress, with findings expected in the next quarter. We will use these findings to reassure ourselves on the way we currently gather and use performance data, and to drive improvements where necessary.

I note the concerns about staffing levels and the impact on response times and ability to handle 101 calls. In Essex the force has identified Contact Management as part of its Major Change Programme and is focussing on how to improve the interactions with the public regarding non-emergency calls. It is expected that improvement will be evident by the time of the next PEEL inspection. I receive regular updates on this activity through my Performance and Resources Scrutiny Board.

I will continue to maintain close scrutiny of the work of Essex Police in this regard, and to hold the Chief Constable to account.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Hirst', written in a cursive style.

Roger Hirst
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex

cc Ben-Julian Harrington, Chief Constable, Essex Police

Appendix A – Recommendations

Recommendation 2

By January 2024, forces should review whether they have effective processes in place to reduce the risk of skilled personnel leaving the organisation. These should include:

- how they conduct exit interviews and use this information to identify patterns and trends in why people leave; and
- how they identify people who are thinking of leaving and the action they take, where appropriate, to encourage them to stay.
- Processes should cover police officers, police staff, special constables and volunteers.

Recommendation 3

By January 2024, forces should review their proactive well-being support for officers and staff in high-stress roles and situations. They should make sure it includes targeted support that goes beyond mandatory annual psychological screening.

Recommendation 6

By January 2024, chief constables should review their force's performance frameworks and governance processes to reassure themselves that the force is:

- collecting and analysing the right data to help it to understand and improve its performance; and
- integrating a culture of evaluation into performance and improvement activity at all levels.