

Performance and Resources Scrutiny Programme 2023

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

Title of Report:	HR Strategic Dashboard Supplementary Report
Classification of Paper	Official
Agenda Number	7.0
Chief Officer	Mr Richard Leicester
Date Paper was Written	6th October 2023
Version Number	1
Report from:	Essex Police
Date of Meeting:	26th October 2023
Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	Mr Adam Pfeiffer
Date of Approval:	ACO Richard Leicester – 13th October 2023
COG meeting date / date of approval (Please indicate whether paper presented to COG or not)	18th October 2023 - COG

1.0 Purpose of Report

This commentary report provides a narrative, summarising key highlights from each section of the accompanied HR strategic dashboard, which relates to the force's attendance, establishment, strength full time equivalent (fte), turnover and diversity profiles. Additional information is also provided with regards to promotions redundancies / business cases as well as an update from Learning & Development (L&D).

2.0 Recommendations

Not applicable.

3.0 **Executive Summary**

Each section contained within the HR strategic dashboard is summarised under section 4.0 below.

4.0 **Introduction/Background**

This commentary report refers to data taken from the force HR system (SAP) as at 30th September 2023, except where alternative data is displayed for trend analysis. The below provides a summary of key highlights from the report:

- In the last quarter a total of 98 officers have joined the force resulting in total recruitment for the financial year to date of 148. As a result, the force has ended with a headcount of 3813 which is +48 higher than the minimum headcount requirement of 3765 and +3 against the increased headcount requirement of 3810.
- With regards to applications, the proportion of ethnic minority candidates and female candidates remains strong.
- With regards to ethnic minority recruitment, there has been a significant increase in quarter 2 (7 / 7.14%) when compared to quarter 1 (1 / 2.00%). However, due to attrition there has only been a net overall headcount increase of 1 (from 153 as at 30th June 2023 to 154 as at 30th September 2023).
- With regards to gender, of the 148 joiners this financial year to date (April to September 2023), a total of 61 were female (41.22%). For information, this is the highest ever proportion of female joiners for this period based on data available back to 2009/2010.
- From a force level representation perspective, total female officers have increased from 1402 (37.01%) to 1422 (37.35%). This is a net headcount increase of 20 and a percentage point increase of 0.34. Of note, this is the highest ever headcount and proportion of female officers on record.
- With regards to officer turnover, a total of 150 officers have left the force this financial year to date. This equates to a turnover rate of 3.94%, which is marginally higher than the same period in 2022 (139 / 3.80%). There was a spike in attrition in August 2023 however, this appears to be an outlier as attrition in the months prior to this and September 2023 were stable. In addition, there are just 17 leavers confirmed for October 2023, which is 6 lower than the monthly projected leavers of 23.
- There were 2 officers successful in the Chief Inspector to Superintendent promotion boards and 39 successful in Sergeant to Inspectors in quarter 2 of 2023/24.
- Officer absence (average days lost per person) for April to September 2023 is 4.10, which is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.52).

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- Staff strength fte has increased by 20.61 fte over quarter 2. Vacancies remain across the majority of commands, however, there are number of external candidates in process and a number of posts are actively being recruited to.
- Staff turnover has reduced in this period (133 / 5.73%) when compared to the same period in 2022 (156 / 6.72%).
- With regards to staff absence, the average days lost per person for April to September 2023 has increased slightly to 4.10, which is higher than the same period in 2022 (4.04).
- During quarter 2 a total of 2 ratified business case moved to their new structure, 4 concluded consultation and 1 new business case was launched.
- The number of specials has reduced from 301 to 283 (a net reduction of 18). However, it should be noted that this is also being seen nationally with a reduction of 36.33% from October 2019 to June 2023. Note, Essex over the same period reduced by 42.45%.
- Specials turnover is high (20.66%) but comparable to the same period last year (20.63%). Application numbers remain relatively low but stable, however, recruitment in quarter 2 was marginally higher than quarter 1 with 7 joining in September 2023, the highest in a single month since July 2022.
- Whilst the overall headcount is lower, the Special Constabulary continue to contribute a significant amount of duty hours at a monthly average of 22.93 per special for the period April to September 2023. The total duty hours worked in September 2023 of 6,065 is the equivalent of 379 specials working a 16-hour month.
- With regards to PCSOs, the strength fte has reduced marginally from 96.96 fte to 96.29 fte (-2.78 fte under establishment of 99.07 fte).
- For PCSOs, the average days lost per person has reduced to 4.49 for April to September 2023, which is a reduction of 0.20 when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.69). This is also the lowest level of absence, for this period, over the last 9 years.

As reported previously, areas of focus going forward will be seeking to increase recruitment of Special Constables throughout 2023/24 to support progress towards a net headcount increase of 100.

The force will continue to prioritise the achievement of the approved recruitment plan and to enhance applications from ethnic minority and female candidates.

Whilst officer absence has improved, it is an area that will continue to be monitored through the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) and Operational Human Resources (HR).

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5.0 Current Work and Performance

Officers

Establishment v Strength and Vacancies

As at 30th September 2023, the strength was 3742.17 fte, which is -12.83 fte under the establishment of 3755.00. This represents a net increase of +20.87 since the last HR report as at 30th June 2023.

With regards to vacancies, there has been a positive improvement in two of the Commands with the highest vacancies highlighted in the last HR Data pack. **Learning and Development** have reduced from -16.53% to -12.64% and **HQ Directorate** from -12.94% to +20.00%. The **Serious Crime Directorate** vacancy rate has increased marginally and continues to have a high number of vacancies.

In addition to this, there have also been positive reductions in Continuous Improvements & Analytics, Crime & Public Protection and Local Policing Support Unit.

Other areas of note relate to the Operational Policing Command (OPC), which have increased from -8.02% to -9.58% and, as a result, now have the third highest level of vacancies. Within this Command there are vacancies across the majority of departments, with the highest being in Firearms (-11.55%). It is worth noting however that 8 officers were successful on the firearms course that concluded in July 2023 and are due to be posted once vetting clears. This should result in the majority of vacancies being filled. There is a further firearms course commencing on 4th December 2023 of up to 9 internal officers and up to 3 external transferees, which, if successful, will result in the remaining gaps being filled.

In addition to OPC, there has also been an increase in the vacancy rate for ERSOU (from -6.37% to -7.29%), however, as reported previously the force continues to support the release of officers into ERSOU. At the time of writing 8 officers had applied for ERSOU and are currently going through the selection process.

Of the three Local Policing Areas (LPAs), the North and West have remained relatively static in terms of vacancy rate. The South have the highest vacancy rate of the three LPAs (-3.93%) however this position is expected to improve month on month over the next quarter.

The Resourcing Deployment panel chaired by the Director or HR and attended by Assistant Chief Constables and Human Resources continues to meet monthly. As previously reported, the release of officers into vacancies agreed at this panel is dependent on a number of factors, such as current resourcing priorities and vacancy levels.

Recruitment Joiners and Applications

Since the last update, a total of 98 officers have joined the force (July to September 2023). This is made up of an intake of 87 new recruits that started on the 29th September 2023, as well as 8 transfers in, 2 returners and 1 re-joiner.

The total recruitment for the full financial year to date (April to September 2023) is 148. This is made up 126 new recruits, 17 transfers in, 3 returners and 2 re-joiners. Of the 126 new recruits, 56 joined under the traditional Initial Police Learning & Development Programme (IPLDP), 29 Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), 28 Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP), 9 PCDA Investigate First and 4 DHEP Investigate First.

Police Uplift Programme Headcount Position

The force headcount as at 30th September 2023 was 3813, which is 48 higher than minimum headcount requirement of 3765 and +3 against the increased headcount requirement of 3810. For information, on top of the additional recruitment of +45, the force has requested and had confirmation of an additional 10 to be achieved by 31st March 2024. This will result in a headcount requirement of 3820 (+55 on top of the maintenance level of 3765) for the 31st March 2024. Based on current projections, it is expected the force will achieve this position.

The table below shows the total officer application numbers each financial year from 2019/20 to 2022/23 and the 2023/24 financial year to date (April to September 2023). This includes a breakdown of applications by ethnicity grouping and gender.

Month/Year	Total	Ethnic Minority		Female	
		No	%	No	%
2019/20	2695	263	9.76%	871	32.32%
2020/21	3502	441	12.59%	1239	35.38%
2021/22	2099	238	11.34%	878	41.83%
2022/23	2055	273	13.28%	844	41.07%
Apr-23	100	11	11.00%	28	28.00%
May-23	125	16	12.80%	52	41.60%
Jun-23	113	16	14.16%	40	35.40%
Jul-23	170	25	14.71%	60	35.29%
Aug-23	256	39	15.23%	100	39.06%
Sep-23	166	21	12.65%	68	40.96%
2023/24 YTD Total	930	128	13.76%	348	37.42%

The table demonstrates there was a significant increase in applications in quarter 2 (592 / monthly average of 197) when compared to quarter 1 (338 / monthly average of 113). Of note, the total applications in August of 256, is the highest number in a single month since August 2021 (258).

With regards to diversity, of the total 930 applications this financial year to date, a total of 128 were from ethnic minority candidates. This equates to 13.76%, which is higher than the previous 4 full financial years.

With regards to gender, the total proportion of applications from female candidates is 37.42%. Whilst this is lower than the proportion in each of the last 2 financial years, it is higher than both 2020/21 (35.38%) and 2019/20 (32.32%). It is also worth noting that the average proportion of applications from female candidates improved in quarter 2 (monthly average of 38.44%) compared to quarter 1 (monthly average of 35.00%).

The next intake is scheduled for 18th December 2023 for up to 66 officers. At time of writing, there are 5 candidates cleared for the intake plus 1 ready to offer. In addition, there are 67 candidates in the pre-employment (clearance) stage, excluding those 'on hold' due to vetting, medical issues, or other matters, should any additional candidates be required. Including the 'on hold' candidates there are a total of 109 candidates in pre-employment. From pre-selection pipeline, based on candidate's current position in the recruitment process there is currently an expected additional 19 candidates viable to be able to join by 18th December 2023. This creates a current total potential of 86 candidates for the remaining 60 places to fill.

Recruitment continues to push forward advance clearances with the ambition of 100% of the intake cleared 4 weeks before the 18th December 2023, to give flexibility where required.

Diversity – Ethnicity

With regards to ethnic minority recruitment, there has been a significant increase in quarter 2 (7 / 7.14%) when compared to quarter 1 (1 / 2.00%).

For the financial year to date (quarters 1 and 2 combined) a total of 148 officers have joined, of which 8 were ethnic minority (5.41%).

The below table demonstrates the proportion of ethnic minority officers that have joined (all entry routes) for the three previous financial years (2022/23, 2021/22 and 2020/21):

Ethnicity Group	2023/24 YTD: Apr to Sep 23			2022/23		2021/22		2020/21	
	H'Count	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total
Asian / Asian British	3	37.50%	2.03%	35.00%	1.65%	48.15%	3.49%	27.59%	2.60%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	0	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	0.47%	25.93%	1.88%	24.14%	2.27%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	4	50.00%	2.70%	50.00%	2.36%	18.52%	1.34%	41.38%	3.90%
Other Ethnic Group	1	12.50%	0.68%	5.00%	0.24%	7.41%	0.54%	6.90%	0.65%
Total	8	100.00%	5.41%	100.00%	4.73%	100.00%	7.26%	100.00%	9.42%

Of the 8 ethnic minority joiners, 3 are Asian / Asian British (2.03%), 4 are Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups (2.70%) and 1 identified as Other Ethnic Group (0.68%). Positively, all three represent an improvement when compared to last financial year, however so far, there have been no Black / African / Caribbean / Black British officers join the force.

With regards to force level officer representation, despite a stronger quarter of recruitment, the overall ethnic minority headcount has only increased by 1 (from 153 as at 30th June 2023) to 154 as at 30th September 2023. This is a percentage point increase of 0.01 (from 4.04% to 4.05%).

The overall net increase has been limited due to turnover during the period, which is covered later in report. However, as stated earlier, application numbers from ethnic minority candidates remain strong and therefore, given the progress seen in quarter 2, it is expected this will continue to improve across the final 2 intakes of the financial year. For information, the 5.41% ethnic minority joiners is 5.88 percentage points below the 2021 economically active population (EAP) of Essex (11.29%) but,

positively, the ethnic minority application proportion for April to September 2023, is 13.76% (2.47 percentage points higher).

As at 5th October 2023, there were a total of 342 candidates in the selection process, of which 34 were ethnic minority candidates (9.94%). Of the 34 ethnic minority candidates in process, 1 has cleared and is waiting to join the next intake and it is expected up to a further 3 will clear. If all 4 are successful, this would equate to 6.06% of the total intake of 66.

With regards to positive action, activity remains ongoing to further increase the number of candidates in process. Creative new and pro-active ideas are constantly being devised to make recruitment events and processes as meaningful and productive as possible. Below is a summary of key activity in this area:

- To maximise recruitment opportunities, the HR teams have undertaken a total of 30 outreach / recruitment events to promote policing as a career. These have occurred in a wide variety of venues and locations such as Universities, Colleges, Schools, Jobcentres, Town Halls and a major shopping centre, using Census 2021 and other demographic data, to maximise applications from the most diverse group of people possible.
- The force has retained 78 Recruitment Ambassadors, recruited from a variety of commands and teams. The HR Innovation Team ran a Recruitment Ambassador training event on 25th July 2023 at HQ, with positive feedback given by those in attendance. Recruitment Ambassadors continue to support ongoing outreach opportunities across the County.
- The Media & Communications team continues to run the We Value Difference recruitment campaigns across all of our owned channels, and a wide variety of external platforms, to attract a diverse array of applicants. They continue to use authentic case studies of serving Essex Police officers to attract recruits and have worked closely with MESA to ensure representation in this respect.
- A Positive Action Programme is in place to support those applying for the role of police officer. The Positive Action Team, working with the Corporate Recruitment Team, are managing 97 recruitment buddies currently supporting 59 recruit applicants.
- The Positive Action Team are working in partnership with Essex County Council on pathway/promotional/case study advertisements (ECC Careers magazine edition 4 & 5). This partnership working will help deliver Essex Police recruitment strategy further and wider (Partners & Communities).
- Recruitment events are managed through a joint planning diary and attendance is agreed between Corporate Recruitment, HR Innovation and Positive Action. Considering the 2021 Census information, creative new locations for attendance (and to maximise potential applicant numbers) have been explored. The new Community Mapping system, in conjunction with the Community Engagement tracker, managed through the Quality of Service team, will help inform future events and outreach.
- The Positive Action Team continue to support and, in some cases, lead on organising significant force events including National Inclusion Week, Black History Month and International Men's Day, all of which have their own planning teams to co-ordinate activity.

- The Community Mapping project that is led by The Positive Action Team's Chief Inspector continues to gather momentum. The system is now live on Connexions and site visits and usage are increasing. Operational usage is increasing and feedback from diverse teams is helping to shape the system. Demonstrations have been undertaken with the DCC, at Public Confidence Board and, in the near future, at the Local Policing Commander's Board and SLT, as well as to colleagues from Thames Valley Police. The system is helping to inform Community Engagement activity and now includes CSEO-sourced data from all 14 districts and, with new information recently added around IAG chairs, licensed premises, MPs and local councillors and work continues with PAU to explore crime/ASB incident and census 2021 'feeds' into the system. Finally, the Specials Co-ordinator continues to work with IT, to develop a Power app facility for the system.
- The Positive Action Team have supported the Essex Police Summer promotion processes alongside HR People Development and L&D through a collaborative approach and continue to support for forthcoming 2023 promotion exams.

Diversity - Gender

With regards to gender, of the 148 joiners this financial year to date (April to September 2023), a total of 61 were female (41.22%). This is the highest ever proportion of female joiners for this period based on data available back to 2009/10.

With regards to force level representation, total female officers have increased from 1402 (37.01%) to 1422 (37.35%). This is a net headcount increase of 20 and a percentage point increase of 0.34. Of note, this is the highest ever headcount and proportion of female officers on record.

With regards to the recruitment pipeline, as at 5th October 2023, there were 148 female candidates in progress, which equates to 43.28% of all candidates. This is higher than the current force proportion of 37.35% and marginally below is marginally below the 2021 Essex female EAP of 47.65%.

Turnover

So far this financial year to date, a total of 150 officers have left the force. This is a turnover rate of 3.94% and is marginally higher than the same period in 2022 (139 / 3.80%).

The projected attrition for quarter 2 was set at 23 a month (total of 69), however a total of 77 left. The increase was predominately due to a spike in August 2023 whereby 32 officers left, which is the highest ever number of leavers for the month of August going back to 2009 and is the highest in a single month since July 2018 (33 leavers). That said, it would appear this is an outlier, as both July and September 2023 were more in line with the projection of 23 with 21 and 24 leavers respectively. In addition, at the time of writing there were just 17 confirmed leavers for October 2023 (6 lower than the projection), which evidences attrition is still relatively stable.

With regards to ethnicity, a total of 10 ethnic minority officers have left so far this financial year to date (April to September 2023). Of the 10 leavers, 4 resigned, 2 transferred to other forces, 2 were ill-health retired, 1 retired and 1 was dismissed.

As reported in the last update, 5 left in quarter 1, with a further 5 leaving in the latest quarter. Of the 5 that have left this quarter, there were only 2 resignations, of which 1 left to take up a role in the FCR but did not detail why they no longer wanted to be an officer and the other declined to state their leaving reason.

Looking forward there is currently 1 confirmed leaver in October 2023 who is resigning as they feel officers are not paid enough and due to the lack of support when being investigated and the timeframes accompanied with that.

With regards to gender, a total of 52 female officers have left for the period April to September 2023, which is higher than the same period last year (41). Of the 52 leavers there were 38 resignations, 8 retirements, 3 transfers to other forces and 3 ill-health retirements. It is worth noting that, whilst resignations are high, 26 of the 38 (68.42%) were in quarter 1 compared to 12 in quarter 2 (31.58%). Looking forward there are just 6 female leavers for October 2023 (3 resignations, 2 transfers out of force and 1 retirement).

For information, since the last update, the Retention Ambassador Scheme was launched. Positively, this has seen a significant uptake in the short period it has been running with 29 ambassadors recruited from 12 different Commands. There are a wide range of roles and ranks represented throughout, with ambassadors ranging from Constable to Chief Supt rank with. Note, of the 29 ambassadors, 16 of these are female (55%) and 2 are from an ethnic minority (7%).

The ambassadors have been supported with a new bespoke training input from the Leadership team, and direction and guidance from HR Strategy based on the National Retention Framework best practice.

A total of 26 referrals have been received to-date and have all been appropriately allocated to ambassadors. Of those, 13 of have been self-referrals, 1 has been a proxy referral and 12 originated from transferee vetting referrals. Of the 26 a total of 10 cases have been completed and 16 remain ongoing. All 26 individuals remain in force as of 3rd October 2023.

Police Officer Promotions by Ethnicity

During this period (July to September 2023), promotional processes for the ranks of Inspector and Superintendent have concluded. The Chief Inspector to Superintendent promotion process took place between July and August 2023 resulting in two officers being successful for promotion to Superintendent and they will take up a promotional posting in due course.

The Sergeant to Inspector process took place between July and September 2023 resulting in 39 officers being successful for promotion to Inspector who will take up promotion in due course.

Looking ahead, in October 2023, a promotion process for Constable to Sergeant will commence, this is expected to complete in December 2023 with those successful taking up promotional postings in 2024.

Senior Officer Movement / Transfers

The following table shows the number of Chief Inspectors and above that have changed roles (either on promotion or transfer) by rank and quarter. It should be noted, the below does not include individuals who have reverted from a temporary rank and does not include individuals who were promoted and remained in post (i.e. a Temporary Chief Inspector being promoted substantively and remaining in role).

Category	Rank	2022/23					2023/24	
		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total	Qtr 1	Qtr 2
Promotion (inc Tmp Promotions)	Chief Superintendent			1		1	1	
	Superintendent	3				3		
	Chief Inspector	3				3	2	7
Promoted Total		6	0	1	0	7	3	7
Transferred	Chief Officer				2	2		
	Chief Superintendent		1			1	2	
	Superintendent	4	3			7	6	
	Chief Inspector	9	1	8	4	22		4
Promoted Total		13	5	8	6	32	8	4
Grand Total		19	5	9	6	39	11	11

The table demonstrates that in quarter 2 a total of 7 Chief Inspectors moved role on promotion and a further 4 transferred roles. Combined, this is a total of 11 changes in Senior Leadership across varying Commands, which is the same number as seen in quarter 1.

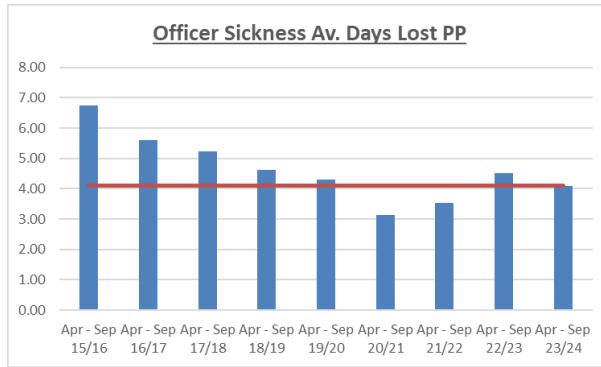
With regards to the transfers, the table below provides a breakdown of the Command / position individuals have transferred from and to.

Rank	Command Level	Position Name	Command Level	Position Name
Chief Inspector	Contact Management	Head of Crime strds Contact Mgt Comm DCI	Professionalism	PSD DCI
	Essex Secondments & Career Breaks	Bus Change Mngr Vid Enabled Policing CI	Support Services	Operational Change Ch Insp (Estates)
	OPC Operational Policing Command	Armed Policing Ch Insp	Continuous Improvement and Analytics	Emergency Services Collab. Prog. Lead(s)
	Professionalism	PSD DCI	Kent & Essex Serious Crime Directorate	MIR DCI

As previously reported, officers will continue to seek promotion and career changes for a variety of reasons and therefore it is expected that movement will continue to take place. However, the latest quarter’s data demonstrates the overall position is relatively stable when compared to previous quarters, with transfers particularly being the lowest number over the time period.

Absence

The average days lost per officer for April to September 2023 is 4.10 days, which is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.52). It should be noted that whilst the average days lost per officer is higher than the same period in 2021 (3.54) and 2020 (3.14), the current position of 4.10 is positive and in fact lower than the same period in each financial year from 2015 to 2019. This can be demonstrated in the below graph:



The red line indicates the current financial year to date average days lost per officer (4.10). This shows that of the 9 periods listed, the current average days lost per officer is lower than in 6 of the previous years positions for the same period.

This, along with the reduction seen when directly compared to the same position last year, suggests that officer absence is improving and, whilst higher than some years, is not deemed a specific area of concern.

The below table shows the total officer payroll hours lost and the percentage of available contracted hours lost for the period April to September 2023, as well as the same period in 2022 and 2021.

Employee Group	2021/22 (Apr to Sep)		2022/23 (Apr to Sep)		2023/24 (Apr to Sep)		Variance 2023/24 v 2022/23	
	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	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	99599.44	3.27%	132027.29	4.17%	124806.45	3.77%	-7220.85	-0.40%

The figures demonstrate that there has been a reduction in percentage of contracted hours lost to sickness for April to September 2023 (3.77%) when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.17%).

With regards to absence terms, there has been a reduction in average days lost per person across all three for the period April to September 2023 when compared to the same position in 2022. Short-term has reduced from 1.15 to 1.05, medium-term from 0.74 to 0.64 and long-term from 2.63 to 2.41.

Psychological related absences continue to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (44.14%), which is an increase compared to same period in 2022 (42.52%). However, when measured as average days lost per person it is 1.81, which represents a reduction when compared to the previous year (1.92). For information, whilst it has reduced it is still higher than the same period in both 2021 (1.33) and 2020 (1.31), however as previously reported, overall absence was lower in these periods.

Of note, respiratory related absences no longer account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (which it did for both the April to September 2022 position and the full 2022/23 financial year). So far, for April to September 2023, 10.17% of absence was lost to respiratory reasons, which is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (17.20%) and 2021 (15.39%). This is also reflected in the average days lost per person, which was 0.42 for this period compared to 0.78 in 2022 and 0.54 in 2021.

Musculo/skeletal related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost with 12.36%, which is an increase when compared to 2022 (11.76%). When measured as average days lost per person it is also the second highest absence reason but has reduced marginally to 0.51 from 0.53.

Below is summary of the 12 general absence reasons for the period April to September 2023 when compared to the same position in 2022:

- Only 3 have increased by more than 0.01 average days lost per person, which are miscellaneous related absences, digestive related absences and genito urinary related absences.
- 2 have increased by just 0.01 average days lost per person (headache / migraine and infectious disease)
- A total of 2 have remained the same (ear/eye and skin related absences)
- Absences due to musculo/skeletal reasons have reduced by 0.02, followed by cardiac/circulatory related absences, which have reduced by 0.06 and nervous system absences, which have reduced by 0.08.
- Psychological related absences have reduced by 0.06 average days lost per person, with the most significant reduction being respiratory related absence (a reduction of 0.36) as identified above.

With regards to Commands, of the 20, a total of 5 have higher average days lost per person in the period April to September 2023 when compared to April to September 2022. However, of those, 2 are in Commands with average headcounts of less than 10, meaning there are much greater fluctuations in absence that can be caused by just one individual being absent. Of the remaining 3, the biggest increase is Criminal Justice, which has gone from 3.55 average days lost person to 4.64 (an increase of 1.09), followed by Student Constables (from 0.94 to 1.39) and then LPA West (from 4.01 to 4.35).

The three commands listed on the HR Strategic Dashboard are those with the current highest average days lost per person for the period April to September 2023 for commands with average headcounts of more than 10. However, it should be noted that, positively, all have reduced when compared to the same period in 2022.

Contact Management has always historically had high levels of absence and, for the current period, has the highest average days lost per person with 7.98. However, positively they have seen the second largest reduction in absence when compared to the same position in 2022 (reducing by 2.02 average days lost per person from 10.00 to 7.98). Continuous Improvement & Analytics has the second highest level of absence with 6.05, however this has reduced from 13.21 and is also a small command in terms of overall headcount so bigger fluctuations in absence are expected. Crime & Public Protection have the third highest average days lost per person (5.15) however, this is a reduction of 0.92 when compared to the same period in 2022 (6.07).

Of the Local Policing Areas (LPAs), the average days lost person has reduced in both LPA North (from 5.04 to 4.79) and LPA South (from 4.22 to 4.01). In contrast however, LPA West have increased from 4.01 to 4.35.

For LPA West, the increase for April to September 2023, when compared to the same period last year, is an increase of 1034 payroll hours lost, which can largely be attributed to an increase of 2579 payroll hours lost for psychological related absence and an increase of 1079 payroll hours for digestive related absence. However, these are also offset by significant reductions in some other absence reasons, most notably -1897 hours for musculo/skeletal related absence and -1446 hours for respiratory related absence.

Adjusted and Recuperative Duties

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative and adjusted duties has reduced marginally from 497 as at 30th June 2023 to 496 as at 30th September 2023. This equates to 13.03% of the total force headcount as at 30th September 2023 (3807). The only significant variations across any of the commands have been reductions in Crime and Public Protection (from 99 to 78) and OPC (from 34 to 25)

As reported in previous updates, Operational HR and the Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) continue to advise on these cases through the Attendance Management Group (AMG) process.

Staff and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

Establishment v Strength and Vacancies

The staff strength as at 30th September 2023 was 2105.34 fte, which is 276.32 fte under the establishment of 2381.66 and equates to a vacancy rate of 11.60%. This is a strength fte increase of 20.61 fte and a vacancy rate decrease of 0.85 percentage points when compared to the 30th June 2023 (from -12.45% to -11.60%).

As reported last quarter, the Command with the highest vacancy rate is Learning & Development (-31.44%). Human Resources have the second highest vacancy rate with -17.75%, however this has reduced when compared to 30th June 2023 position (-22.70%). The Serious Crime Directorate continue to have a high vacancy rate (-16.31%) albeit it has reduced marginally when compared to the previous update (-16.70%).

There have been minor increases in the vacancy rates across a number of Commands including Continuous Improvement & Analytics, Crime & Public Protection, Criminal Justice, Local Policing Support Unit and Support Services.

Contact Management have seen the most significant reduction in vacancy rate from -10.09% as at 30th June 2023, to -3.77% as at 30th September 2023; a percentage point reduction of 6.33.

The top vacancies in force by department and role continue to be reported through the Strategic Change Coordination Board (SCCB) chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. Below provides the latest update with regards to specific departments and roles with high vacancies:

- **Crime Training & Detective Development:** whilst this remains high, the vacancies have reduced from -7.58 to -5.76 and recruitment remains ongoing within the unit.
- **Business Services:** all business centre and geographic services related vacancies have been appointed to with candidates currently undergoing pre-employment checks.
- **Estates:** Estates continue to have a number of growth posts for 2023/24, which are still in the process of being recruited to. Some of the technical roles can be hard to fill but command and corporate recruitment are working with specialist agencies together with external job boards to supply individuals for engineer, surveyor and estates positions. At the time of writing there were 2 external candidates undergoing pre-employment checks.
- **Professional Standards:** vacancies are present across investigations and corporate vetting. Interviews have recently concluded for assistant investigation officers and up to 4 vacancies for Corporate Vetting Decision makers have been sent to redeployees for consideration. In addition, 2 individuals are in pre-employment checks for Corporate Vetting Administrators.
- **Forensics:** the command has been subject to a business case, which went live on 31st July 2023. Recruitment has commenced to fill the vacancies.
- **Roads Policing:** some posts are being held for potential redeployees and all others are at various stages of the recruitment process.
- **Continuous Improvement and Analytics:** recruitment remains ongoing into these vacancies.

In addition to the above departments, there are also a number of roles with high levels of vacancies. The most notable is in the role of Detention Officer, however, there is an intake in October 2023 for up to 12 individuals, which should result in the vacancies being filled.

Positively there has been a reduction in vacancies across roles previously identified as being an outlier, which include Resolution Centre Investigators, Digital Media Advisors and Criminal Intelligence Analysts.

As previously reported, whilst a number of departments have relatively high levels of vacancies, under the new HR Operational business model, HR Business Partners will work closely with Heads of Department with regards to specific areas of concern or risk areas and provide the relevant support, to fill the vacancies, working with Corporate Recruitment where necessary and identifying bespoke recruitment methods, as needed.

With regards to PCSOs, the strength fte has reduced marginally from 96.96 fte as at 30th June 2023 to 96.29 as at 30th September 2023 (-2.78 under the establishment of 99.07). The recruitment into the remaining vacancies is currently under review.

Diversity - Ethnicity and Gender

With regards to staff, the number of ethnic minority staff has reduced to 95 (from 97 as at 30th June 2023) and as a proportion from 4.22% to 4.11%. With regards to gender, the headcount of female staff has increased from 1548 to 1559, however as

a proportion the position has remained relatively static (67.39% compared to 67.37%).

With regards to PCSOs, the ethnic minority headcount has remained at 0. The number of female PCSOs has reduced by 1 to 68, and as a proportion against the total PCSO headcount this has reduced marginally from 64.49% to 64.15%.

Turnover

So far this financial year to date (April to September 2023), a total of 133 staff have left which is a turnover rate of 5.73%. This is lower than the same period last year where 156 staff left (6.72%).

It should be noted that, whilst it does represent a positive reduction compared to the same period in 2022, it is higher than years prior to that.

It is worth noting following a high month of leavers in April 2023 (28), the monthly attrition reduced to an average of just 17 between May and August 2023 with August being particularly low at 11. For September 2023 however, the leavers increased to 36, which is the highest ever for the month of September going back to 2009 and the highest number of leavers since October 2022 (37) and prior to that April 2016 (66).

The increase seen in September 2023 appears to be an outlier as, at the time of writing, there are just 22 confirmed leavers for the month of October 2023, which is a positive reduction and, subject to it not increasing, would be lower than both October 2022 (37) and October 2021 (26).

With regards to the increase seen in September 2023, the 36 leavers were across 18 different departments, with 6 from the FCR and 4 from Business Services. This evidences there isn't a specific area of concern to report.

Focusing on the full financial year to date, of the 133 leavers, a total of 22 are from the FCR, 11 from Business Services, 10 from the Resolution Centre and 8 from Custody, with the others leaving from a range of departments.

For PCSOs, there have just been just 2 leavers this financial year to date, both of which were retirements.

Absence

With regards to staff absence, the average days lost per person for April to September 2023 has increased slightly to 4.10, which is higher than the same period in 2022 (4.04). The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the percentage of available contracted hours lost for April to September 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 and 2021:

OFFICIAL

Employee Group	2021/22 (Apr to Sep)		2022/23 (Apr to Sep)		2023/24 (Apr to Sep)		Variance 2023/24 v 2022/23	
	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	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	70789.12	4.06%	69319.20	4.03%	70275.98	4.08%	956.78	0.05%

The figures demonstrate that 4.08% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence for April to September 2023, which is a marginal increase when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.03%) and when compared to April to September 2021 (4.06%).

With regards to absence term, there has been an increase in long-term absence (from 2.06 average days lost per person to 2.31) but marginal reductions in short-term and medium-term absence.

For staff, psychological related absence continues to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (32.53%), and the average days lost per person has increased slightly from 1.26 for April to September 2022 to 1.33 for April to September 2023. Respiratory related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (12.10%) but the average days lost per person has reduced from 0.99 for April to September 2022 to 0.50 for the same period in 2023.

There have been fluctuations in the 12 general absence reasons, and 5 categories have increased by more than 0.04 average days lost per person (cardiac/circulatory, genito urinary, musculo/skeletal, psychological and nervous system).

Cardiac/circulatory related absence has increased by the most and the main reason for the increase is due to operations (+1129 hours), hospital treatment (+885 hours) and chest pains (+344 hours).

The main reasons for the increases in the other absence categories are detailed below:

- Genito urinary: post operative recovery (+1012 hours) and pregnancy related (+427 hours)
- Musculo/skeletal: fracture (+813 hours) and strain/sprain (+501 hours)
- Psychological: stress (+1877 hours) and bereavement (+1674 hours)
- Nervous system: seizure (+1098 hours)

Of the 17 Commands, 6 have higher average days lost per person for April to September 2023 when compared to the same period in 2022.

In the previous report (as at 30th June 2023) Contact Management had the second highest average days lost per person (in Commands with higher average headcounts), however for April to September 2023 they have returned to being the Command with the highest average days lost per person (5.64). Positively, this is lower than the same period in 2022 (6.77) and 2021 (6.56). The average headcount in Contact Management (525) accounts for 22.63% of the total staff headcount and the Command is consistently in the top 3 Command with the highest average days

lost per person. Therefore, whilst high, this is not a new or emerging area of concern. The absence reasons that account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost in this Command are psychological related absence (34.95%) and respiratory related absence (14.79%).

OPC Operational Policing Command has the second highest average days lost per person for April to September 2023 with 4.97, which is an increase when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.29). The absence reasons that account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost in OPC are musculo/skeletal related absence (22.22%) and miscellaneous absence (18.56%).

Criminal Justice Command remain the Command with the third highest average days lost per person at 4.54. However, this is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.76), 2021 (5.67) and 2020 (5.15). The reasons that account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost in Criminal Justice Command are psychological related absence (47.58%) and musculo/skeletal related absences (13.41%).

For PCSOs, the average days lost per person has reduced to 4.49 for April to September 2023, which is a reduction of 0.20 when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.69). This is also the lowest level of absence, for this period, over the last 9 years.

The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the % of available contracted hours lost for April to September 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 and 2021.

Employee Group	2021/22 (Apr to Sep)		2022/23 (Apr to Sep)		2023/24 (Apr to Sep)		Variance 2023/24 v 2022/23	
	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost	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	5268.68	6.59%	3555.52	4.67%	3472.85	4.49%	-82.67	-0.19%

The figures demonstrate that 4.49% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence for April to September 2023, which is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.67%) and 2021 (6.59%).

For PCSOs, musculo/skeletal related absence accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (36.10%), followed by psychological related absence (16.83%). In terms of average days lost per person musculo/skeletal absence has increased from 0.38 for April to September 2022 to 1.62 for the same period in 2023 and average days lost for psychological related absence have increased to 0.76 from 0.50.

Although musculo/skeletal related absence accounts for the highest proportion and average days lost per person for PCSOs for April to September 2023 there are only 9 instances of absence within this category. Two of these are for broken bones, which account for 55.26% of the payroll hours lost and two for fractures, which account for a further 32.98%. All of the individuals that have been absent for musculo/skeletal related absence had returned to work by 30th September 2023.

Psychological related absence accounts for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost, but there have only been 7 instances of this absence in April to September 2023 (5 for stress and 2 for anxiety). Of these, 1 instance began in the last financial year and only 2 individuals remain absent from work at the time of writing (5th October 2023).

Restricted Duties

The number of staff on restricted duties has increased from 60 as at 30th June 2023 to 73 as at 30th September 2023 and PCSOs have reduced, by 5, from 8 to 3 for the same periods.

As per the update under the officer's section, Operational HR and the PIU continue to advise on these cases through the AMG process.

Performance Improvement Unit (PIU) and Operational HR Absence Update (Officers and Staff)

PIU and Operational HR teams continue to monitor and support through value added activity which includes ongoing training to supervisors and managers and through monitoring compliance with utilisation of the Attendance Support Meeting (ASM) processes across all Commands and Departments.

As at 2nd October 2023, the number of formal stages for both Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) or Capability are 52, which is an increase of 21 cases since the last quarters reporting. PIU and Operational HR provide professional advice and intervention to managers in support of this process. A further 836 are being monitored through the ASM process.

The interventions and absence support work are also subject to the continuing Star Chamber Reviews, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable, whereby cases of long-term absence or high Bradford Score are scrutinised. The star chamber process is now developing into a rotating review cycle with local absence scrutiny actions following the Star Chamber being supported by both Operational HR and PIU.

Senior Staff Movement / Transfers

With regards to senior police staff movement / transfers, date there have been no external joiners to the force in roles graded P05 or above in quarter 2 of 2023/24.

Internally, during this period, a total of 7 staff have transferred into P05 roles or above. Of those 7, a total of 3 relate to the Forensic Redesign Business case that went live during this period. The remaining 4 promotions were into the roles of Head of Case Review & Holmes, Head of Strategic Vulnerability Centre, Head of Resourcing and Head of Financial Strategy.

Business Case Update

During the period 1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023, no redundancies have been approved. The breakdown of Business Cases during the period are as follows:

The following ratified business cases moved to their new structures during this period 1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023:

- **Forensic Redesign** – Collaborative business case for a full restructure of Forensics across Essex and Kent. Launched 27th October 2022, 60-day consultation concluded on 31st December 2022, alternative proposals were reviewed ahead of re-issue to impacted staff. 129 fte impacted by the proposals, 65 individuals in Essex. Selections were conducted in March and April 2023. The new structure went live on 31st July 2023. There was one redundancy from this business case, which was a Kent employee.
- **Technical Surveillance Unit (Covert)** – Relocation of TSU from Feering to a new covert location. Formally launched on the 14th July 2023. Affected seven individuals and, following an agreed reduced consultation period, all of the team agreed to waive full notice period and moved to the new location on 31st July 2023. This was ratified in conjunction with Unison and there were no appeals.

Four business case have concluded consultation and remain in their notice period pending start date of new structures during this period:

- **Crime & Public Protection (C&PP) Assessment Centre** – Consultation launched on 19th April 2023 and the initial period of consultation (30 days) was extended until Friday 26th May 2023. A few counter proposals were received, and these have been reviewed and submitted for consideration to Chief Officers. 33 staff are affected by this business case. The business case is due to move to the new structure on 18th October 2023. Staff are currently being redeployed into new roles in the organisation. There are some potential redundancies, which are to be assessed for consideration by 13th October 2023.
- **Crime & Public Protection (C&PP) MOSOVO** – consultation to amend the shift pattern for officers and staff. Consultation launched 9th June 2023 with a 30-day consultation, which ended 9th July 2023. 13 police staff are affected by this business case. This has concluded, staff commence their new shift pattern on 4th December 2023.
- **Criminal Justice Command Custody** - consultation to amend the shift pattern for officers and staff. In addition, the business case will seek to streamline with 'buddy' custody suites (this is the contractual secondary work location for Detention Officers). Consultation launched 30th June 2023 with a 45-day consultation, which ended on 14th August 2023. 100 police staff are affected by this business case. New shift pattern commences on 2nd October 2023.
- **Contact Management Command team** – consultation launched on 28th June 2023. Two police staff impacted, as their current roles have been removed; new roles are available in the structure at a higher grade, which will be subject to a promotional selection process. Consultation closed on 25th July 2023 and selection process has concluded. Two PSEs were displaced during this process and are currently in their notice/redeployment period until 22nd November 2023.

One business case launched during this period:

- **Contact Management Command** – Proposal to amend the Operating Model includes the creation of new roles. 45-day consultation launched on 10th July

2023. Consultation closed on 24th August 2023. 36 counter proposals submitted, which are currently being considered. Re-issue of the business case is expected shortly. 357 members of staff are impacted by the change, there will be sufficient roles within the new structure for all staff. Selection for the new posts is due to take place in November/December 2023.

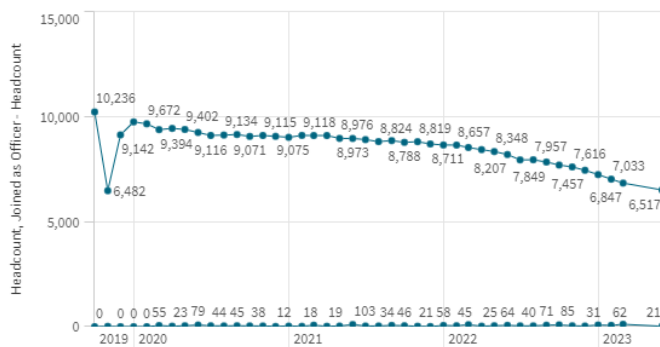
Specials Headcount and Turnover

As at 30th September 2023, there were 283 specials in post on SAP, which is a net reduction of 18 when compared to the position as at 30th June 2023 (301). As previously reported the net reduction continues to be a combination of high turnover and a reduction in recruitment.

With regards to attrition, there have been 63 leavers so far this financial year to date which is a turnover rate of 20.66%. This is lower than the same period last year in terms of headcount (89) but similar as a turnover percentage (20.63%). Of the 63 leavers, the majority resigned (55), with 6 joining Essex police as a new officer recruit, 1 retiring and 1 failing their probation.

It is worth noting that the continued reduction in specials numbers reported through this update is broadly comparable with the national position. The following graph demonstrates the national position for specials from October 2019 to June 2023:

Special Constables



The graph demonstrates that nationally, the total of headcount of specials has reduced from 10,236 in October 2019 to 6,517 in June 2023. This is a reduction of 36.33%.

Essex is slightly higher than this over the same period with a reduction of 42.45%.

Specials Duty Hours

A total of 40,306 duty hours have been worked for the period April to September 2023, which equates to 22.93 average hours per officer. As expected, due to the overall lower headcount, this a reduction when compared to the same period last year (66,934 hours worked / average of 26.78). It should still be noted however, that the total duty hours worked in September 2023 (6,065) is the equivalent of 379 specials working a 16-hour month.

Recruitment and Applications

In relation to recruitment, there have been 20 joiners so far this financial year to date, which is similar to the same period last year (22). Whilst only marginal, there was an increase in recruitment in quarter 2 with a total of 11 joining, compared to 9 in quarter

1. In addition, the total of 7 joiners in September 2023 is the highest in a single month since July 2022 where 9 joined.

With regards to applications, the monthly average for April to September 2023 remained low at 28, however this is only marginally than the average for the same period in 2022 (30).

Looking forward, the next intake is scheduled for 14th October 2023. At the time of writing there were 5 confirmed for the course with a further 2 possible. Positively, if all 7 join, this would take the total joiners to 7 for the second consecutive month. In addition to this, there are also a further 32 candidates currently undergoing pre-employment checks.

Outreach carried out by the Corporate Recruitment team over the last quarter has included activity / attendance at: Harlow Jobs Fair, Special Constable Recruitment Evening at Essex Police College, University and Careers Fair at Colchester Sixth Form, Southend Job Centre, Clacton Police Station Open Day, Chelmsford College Progression Fair, Writtle University College fresher's fair. Schools and college events booked in alongside Corporate Recruitment, HR Innovation and Positive Action will also take place.

Below is a summary of key numbers and recent marketing and outreach activity:

- Advertising across all local volunteering websites
- Recruitment leaflets given to Chelmsford CVS, which they will take out on outreach and have around their hubs.
- Specials Recruitment Information Event – 50% attendance, resulted in 3 new applications.
- HR have attended 80 events since April 2023 promoting all recruitment pipelines.
- We have new programmes in place to support candidates throughout their recruitment journey.
- New Speak to a Special option where candidates can request to discuss the role with a current serving Special Constable.
- New merchandise kits to be distributed across the county to support promoting the role. New option for transferees from another force with a "Quick Apply" option, along with a "Quick Apply" option for people interested in becoming a new Special Constable.

Corporate Recruitment and Corporate Marketing, in conjunction with the Specials Command lead, continue to work together to enhance the number of applications received. Specials recruitment forms a clear part of the strategic marketing plan for 2023/24. Progress of specials recruitment will continue to be monitored weekly through tactical and strategic checkpoint meetings to ensure effective oversight.

Diversity - Ethnicity and Gender

The number of ethnic minority specials has reduced by 2 from 16 as at 30th June 2023 to 14 as at 30th September 2023, which is a percentage point reduction of 0.37 from 5.32% to 4.95%.

With regards to the number of female specials, the headcount has reduced from 93 (30.90%) as at 30th June 2023 to 83 (29.33%) as at 30th September 2023.

All Employee Groups Protected Characteristics

There are no significant variations to report when compared to June 2023. However, it should be noted that, as per the update provided in April 2023, the force is the final stages of implementing the latest standardised data set for protected characteristics. The revised standards have been agreed through the NPCC DEI Coordination Committee and, once implemented, will result in some existing entries within the protected characteristics being removed and/or replaced. This may result in a reduction in some of the completion rates for certain protected characteristics (such as gender identity and marital status), however, once the HR system SAP has been updated, communications will be sent out encouraging individuals to review and update, where necessary, their diversity data in SAP.

Health and Wellbeing Services Update

The Winter Health initiative commences in early October 2023 with the Flu Vaccination Programme being delivered across Essex and early interest in the booking of appointments is very positive. A total of 750 vaccinations have been purchased for the delivery programme for this year, with the clinics commencing earlier than in previous years to ensure optimum usage and vaccinations benefits.

The Force now benefits from the addition of the first cohort of the new Peer Support Network being in place and supporting the organisation. Further courses are scheduled to develop and grow the network in order to provide local support, guidance and signposting for colleagues and promotion of wellbeing activity and interventions held centrally.

Review of the Reasons for Referral to Occupational Health and Counselling & Wellbeing Services:

This section of the report is based upon data gathered from internal survey submissions completed by OH Advisers and Counselling and Wellbeing Counsellors between 12th December 2022 and 5th October 2023.

Occupational Health Data

In the period reviewed there have been 734 referrals to Occupational Health. The data collection form surveys information on three key categories of referral; musculoskeletal, psychological and respiratory. These three categories total 543 submissions.

Of these 543 OH submissions, 38 (7%) resulted from injuries on duty. Of these 38 cases, 19 were related to arrest/restraint, 5 were manual handling, 6 were RTC related and 8 were as a result of a slip, trip or fall. There were 27 cases (5%) resulting from off duty incidents.

Musculoskeletal

Of the 212 musculoskeletal submissions, the highest scoring categories are aching joints, back ache, back pain and knee problems, closely followed by broken bone, fracture and frozen shoulder.

Consequently, the number of cases in each category of musculoskeletal referrals does not lead to a particular causation requiring intervention, albeit that back ache and back pain generated 51 referrals and, as such, it is wise to remind individuals of the need to complete DSE risk assessments and to use office equipment correctly.

The in-house physiotherapist is able to assist with many of the back/knee and shoulder issues described above and demand for this service has been high. These services will continue to be promoted, as will advice on the correct usage of Display Screen Equipment.

Psychological

There were 148 submissions in this category, the underlying causes being assessed as 44 (30%) private related, 45 (30%) work related, 58 (39%) were a combination and 1 (1%) n/a.

Respiratory

There have been only 12 responses in this category, 3 of which were breathing problems and 2 of which were upper respiratory tract infections, the other categories selected were 1 case only. There are insufficient referrals in this area to draw any conclusions for future activity.

Counselling and Wellbeing Data

In the period reviewed there have been 191 submissions from our counselling team. Of these, 94 (49%) were for private related reasons, 48 (25%) work related and 49 (26%) were a combination of private and work. Of the 94 'private' cases, 74 were triaged to our Employee Assistance Programme. The highest number of cases were therefore for reasons classed as private rather than work.

Underlying Reasons – Private

Of the 94 referrals driven by private reasons, 26 were for loss/bereavement, 14 for personal trauma, 14 related to other health issues, 32 related to relationships, 52 related to personal stress or anxiety and 9 related to depression. All other categories were 5 cases or less. Please note that more than one reason may be recorded in each case and thus percentages cannot be calculated.

Where the referral to Counselling and Wellbeing Team is for private reasons, at the triage stage the client will be referred to the EAP. During the period under review, 74 individuals were referred to the Employee Assistance Programme. Many officers and staff also self-refer directly to the EAP and, whilst the data on these referrals is available from our provider, it does not form part of this report.

Underlying Reasons – Work

Of the 48 referrals driven by work reasons, 13 were related to trauma, 32 were related to stress/anxiety and 9 related to PSD investigation. All other categories were 6 cases or less. From the data collated, it is reasonable to assume that trauma referrals tend to be incident at work related and stress/anxiety tend to be day to day work related. If this viewpoint is correct, then 'day to day work' generated a higher number of referrals than traumatic incidents.

Underlying Reasons – Combined

Of those 49 referrals where both private and work-related issues were identified as the cause, 45 were related to stress or anxiety and 11 were for trauma. All other categories were cases 3 or less. Please note that more than one reason may be recorded in each case and thus percentages cannot be calculated.

Learning and Development Update

Foundation Training

Since the introduction of PEQF in March 2022, 490 new officers have joined the force. Work continues with College of Policing to optimise the existing routes as well as the development of the non-accredited new route which will be known as Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP). Whilst not accredited, PCEP will be delivered under the PEQF umbrella. The College expect to publish high level course specification in the next month in preparation for launch, from April 2024. 3 cohorts of early PEQF students (those who joined in early 2022) have now undertaken or commenced their protected learning time. This is duty planned as business as usual abstraction and has settled into a model, which is seen as good practice. A collaborative strategic planning day was held on 26th September 2023 with Kent and Essex Foundation training teams as well as colleagues from Anglia Ruskin University in order to review current practices as well as prepare for future changes including year 3 for the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship programme (PCDA), which commences in March 2024.

Crime Training & Development

In response to the Force priority to increase detective numbers and capability, the number of Officers on the Detective Pathway with a National Investigators Exam (NIE) pass is 250 following the Sep 2023 NIE. 13 of 21 candidates passed that exam giving us a 61.9 % pass rate, which is above the national average of 53.2%. At present 21 candidates have indicated that they will sit the NIE in November 2023 and these are an additional figure to those reflected as being on the pathway with an NIE pass.

Specialist Child Abuse Investigations Development Programme (SCAIDP) portfolios continue to receive additional focus and support through a dedicated Investigative Coach. As of mid-September 2023, we have 61 accredited specialist investigators registered with the College of Policing and a further 28 working toward this

accreditation. These 28 have already received the required training course and their Command is implementing new practices to support their accreditation.

The Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Investigative Skills Development Programme (RISDP) is being rolled out to all forces following a pilot with current Op Soteria Forces. The training will consist of 8 online e-learning modules and 3 classroom-based modules. Members of the Essex Crime Training team are attending the train the trainer event on 28th September 2023.

The Virtual Crime Academy (VCA) maintains its expansion and delivery of valuable support to investigators across all areas of business and has received over 49,000 visits in the last 90 days. Recent updates include a case file page, together with dedicated tiles for the portfolios associated with the rank and role accreditation processes. There are new 'drop in' sessions being run through the VCA for both forensics and case file training and it continues to be used as a forum for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) delivery with a forward-facing programme being constantly planned and promoted. The previously mentioned sharing of the VCA format with other forces has seen several of them taking steps toward replicating it within their own areas.

Personal Safety and Taser Training

We are still awaiting progress from the College of Policing in publishing the Approved Professional Practice (APP) or the new curriculum which will enable forces to fully introduce the scenario-based training for Police and Public Safety Training (PPST) by April 2024. A paper will be presented to Chief Officer Group in October 2023 with regards to implementing the required changes, which will lead to an additional training requirement as well as an increased operational abstraction overhead. As previously reported, in June 2023 we invited members of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) to observe PPST, which was particularly useful in providing further transparency to our approach to training in a potentially contentious area (use of force). The Practical Skills Chief Inspector is now working with the Strategic IAG to consider an IAG working group for Learning and Development to formalise this type of activity into the future.

There are currently 730 Standard Trained Officers in Essex against the force establishment target of 737, with further training being delivered imminently.

Driver Training

There has been a net increase of response drivers across the force since May 2022 when the need for additional trainers was identified. The growth of response drivers on LPA teams has been accelerating since May 2023 and there are now 307 response drivers on Local Policing Teams and a further 59 on Community Policing Teams. The feedback from the officers has been extremely positive.

Leadership Academy

Since March 2023, the Leadership Academy have delivered further 'Be the Change' leadership courses (1 Sgt and 2 PSE). Over the coming months (September –

December 2023) the plan is to provide combined PSE/Sgt courses, training approximately 80 additional supervisors in key leadership roles across the force. Furthermore, as mentioned in the last update, a new course has been developed which is 'Be the Change' for Chief Inspectors. This launched on 21st September 2023, consisting of 2 face to face development days with a rolling programme of a further 5 inputs, which will be accessible between the 2 face to face days. The cohort of 11 recently promoted Chief Inspectors have commenced the first course and all existing Chief Inspectors and police staff senior leaders of equivalent grade will attend the programme in the months ahead. The programme covers organisational and operational topics relevant to the ranks and roles of the participants.

With regards to the Professional Assessment Team (PAT), there are currently 91 Sergeant candidates and 6 Inspectors in the assessment process with a further batch of newly promoted Inspectors to join the cohort shortly.

Performance Design & Evaluation (PDE, E-Learning Developers and IT Training)

The latest round of Flex Training has been attended by over nine hundred LPT Officers. The subject matter of 'Domestic Abuse Investigations' is very relevant as the training, including interactive inputs on Stalking Homicide, Stalking Prevention Orders, Domestic Abuse Prevention Notifications/Orders, Civil Orders and Evidence Led prosecutions, link with three force priorities: Domestic Abuse, Violence Against Women and Girls and Stalking and Harassment. As a result of this training, the force saw an immediate increase in the submission of Domestic Abuse Prevention Notifications applications.

Online training for V6 of Athena went live on 27/09/2023, which will aim to deliver the necessary skills to all Athena users across the Force by the end of January 2024. The modularised approach to this training will allow officers and staff to use the training as 'how to' videos once the revised system is launched. This will assist in overcoming training fade and provide 'point of need' training resources. V7 of Athena, incorporating Digital Case File will now go live in 2025. Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) training (replacement of PNC) is still progressing well, and we have successfully gone live with the Property Application, Drivers Application and Vehicles Application. The launch of the 'Wanted Persons' module was due to go live in August 2023, but this has now been delayed until early 2024. Ongoing development has been completed by the Home Office on the existing training products for LEDS and the enhanced products will start to be released soon.

6.0 Implications (Issues)

Not applicable, however section 6.3 identifies area of risk.

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.

Recruitment numbers remain positive, which has resulted in the September 2023 uplift requirement being exceeded.

The representation of ethnic minority officers (4.05%) remains relatively strong and female officers (37.35%) continues to increase with current headcounts and proportions at the highest ever levels. 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.

Whilst the overall number of specials has continued to reduce, the special constabulary continue to contribute a significant number of hours to policing, with the latest month (September 2023) at 6,065, which is the equivalent of 379 specials working a 16-hour month.

6.2 Demand

Whilst the national uplift programme has concluded, demand remains high within Human Resources, Business Services and Learning and Development due to the need to effectively resource and train the force accordingly. As previously reported, demand is expected to continue in Learning & Development, Operational HR and Resourcing due to the overall impact that increased workforce numbers have on the departments in terms of the ongoing support they provide.

6.3 Risks/Mitigation

The last HR report highlighted a risk with regards to the recruitment pipeline, however following a significant amount of activity this risk has reduced considerably. This is demonstrated by the latest headcount requirements for September 2023 being exceeded and application numbers improved significantly over recent months.

Whilst the current projections to achieve the March 2024 uplift requirements are positive, other factors such as turnover could impact the force's ability to achieve these requirements, especially in light of the continued high number of officers in process to transfer out. Whilst this has yet to come to fruition and turnover is relatively stable this is an area that is monitored daily. For information, if required, there is flexibility in the recruitment plan to increase intakes if attrition was to rise to ensure uplift requirements are met.

6.4 Equality and/or Human Rights Implications

As previously reported, 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
Performance Improvement Unit
Learning and Development

8.0 Actions for Improvement

Specials Recruitment

As stated in the report reductions in the special constabulary are not unique to Essex and are being seen nationally. That said, activity remains ongoing between Corporate Recruitment and Corporate Marketing, in conjunction with the Specials Command lead to enhance the number of applications received.

9.0 Future Work/Development and Expected Outcome

1. Increase the number of specials throughout 2023/24 in line with the aspiration to achieve a net headcount increase of 100 by 31st March 2024.

Expected Outcome: progress towards a net increase in specials has not happened so far this financial year to date and is not expected to happen in the immediate future. Whilst there has been a small increase in specials recruitment overall it is relatively low which, coupled with high turnover (albeit it is stable) is contributing towards a declining position.

2. Continue to increase female officer representation throughout 2023/24.

Expected Outcome: the force recruited its highest ever proportion of female officers for the period April to September (going back as far as 2009) which contributed to having the highest ever number of female officers on record as at 30th September 2023. In light of this and strong application numbers, it is anticipated that further progress is expected throughout 2023/24.

3. Continue to increase ethnic minority officer representation throughout 2023/24.

Expected Outcome: there was a significant increase in ethnic minority recruitment in quarter 2 compared to quarter 1 however due to turnover, the net increase was limited. That said, the position has improved marginally and at the time of writing there were 34 ethnic minority candidates in progress and

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application numbers continue to be strong. Therefore, it is expected the position will improve throughout the financial year.

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