

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	10
Chief Officer	Mr Richard Leicester
Date Paper was Written	5th January 2024
Version Number	4
Report from:	Essex Police
Date of Meeting:	25th January 2024
Author on behalf of Chief Officer:	Mr Adam Pfeiffer
Date of Approval:	15th January 2024
COG meeting date / date of approval (Please indicate whether paper presented to COG or not)	17th January 2024 - 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 31st December 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 55 officers have joined the force resulting in total recruitment for the financial year to date of 203. As a result, the force has ended the period with a headcount of 3819, which is +54 higher than the minimum headcount requirement of 3765 and -1 below the increased headcount requirement of 3820.
- With regards to applications, the proportion of applications from ethnic minority candidates is the highest for the period April to December over the last 4 years. Of note, November 2023 saw the second highest ever proportion of ethnic minority candidates apply in a single month since records began in January 2017. In addition, the proportion of applications from female candidates remains very strong.
- For the financial year to date, a total of 203 officers have joined, of which 11 were ethnic minority (5.42%). This represents an improvement when compared to the 2022/23 financial year (4.74%). With regards to female joiners, a total of 83 (40.89%) have joined this financial year to date which is the highest proportion of female joiners for this period based on data available back to 2009/10.
- From a force representation perspective, the proportion of ethnic minority officers has reduced marginally (from 4.05% to 4.01%) as has female officers (from 37.35% to 37.28%). However, with regards to female officers, the current headcount and proportion is higher than any previous end of financial year position on record.
- There has been a reduction in overall officer turnover, however, female turnover has increased this financial year to date compared to the previous year.
- Over this quarter, the Constable to Sergeant promotion board concluded where up to 60 were successful.
- Officer absence (average days lost per person) for April to December 2023 is 6.63, which is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (7.34).
- With regards to staff, vacancies remain across the majority of commands, however, there have been positive reductions in the vacancy rate across a number of departments.

- Staff turnover has reduced in this period (188 / 8.09%) when compared to the same period in 2022 (235 / 10.12%).
- With regards to staff absence, the average days lost per person for April to December 2023 is 6.83, which is slightly higher than the same period in 2022 (6.53).
- During quarter 3 a total of 4 ratified business case moved to their new structure, 1 concluded consultation and 4 new business cases were launched.
- The number of specials has reduced from 283 to 266 (a net reduction of 17). This is predominately due to low levels of recruitment, and turnover. However, positively, there has been a reduction in turnover over the period April to December 2023 with an average of just 7 a month.
- Whilst the overall headcount is lower, the Special Constabulary continued to provide a total of 6,684 hours in December 2023 (the equivalent of 418 specials working on a 16-hour month), which is an increase compared to September 2023 (6,065 / 379).
- With regards to PCSOs, the strength fte has reduced marginally from 96.29 fte to 95.98 fte (-3.09 under the establishment of 99.07).
- For PCSOs, the average days lost per person has increased to 10.18 for April to December 2023, which is an increase of 2.37 average days when compared to the same period in 2022 (7.80). However, this is lower than the same period in 2021 (11.26) and is primarily due to a small number of long-term absence cases.

As reported previously, areas of focus going forward will be seeking to maintain and increase the number of Special Constables.

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).

5.0 Current Work and Performance

Officers

Establishment v Strength and Vacancies

As at 30th December 2023, the strength was 3748.81, which is -6.19 fte under the establishment of 3755.00. This represents a net increase in strength of +6.64 since the last HR report as at 30th September 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, as 30th

September 2023. The **Serious Crime Directorate** has reduced from -17.72% to -14.69% and **Learning & Development** has reduced from -12.64% to -10.80%. Of note, positively, this is the second consecutive quarter the vacancy rate has reduced in Learning & Development (-16.53% as at 30th June 2023).

In addition to the above, there has also been a reduction in the vacancy rates across a number of other Commands, with the most significant being **Professionalism** which has reduced from -6.43% to -1.04% and **Crime & Public Protection Command** reducing from -6.85% to -3.50%. All 3 Local Policing Areas (LPAs) along with Essex Criminal Justice Command, ERSOU and Operational Policing Command have also reduced.

Local Policing Support Unit and Continuous Improvement and Analytics have remained relatively static with HQ Directorate increasing from being +20.00% over established to -6.67% (albeit -6.67% is just a 0.50 fte vacancy). The only Command of note that has increased when compared to last quarter is **Contact Management** (from -6.53% to -8.41%), which is the third highest vacancy rate in force. For information, a memorandum of understanding has been established to define activity that is to be undertaken across the force to increase current resourcing levels and support maintaining the required resourcing levels in the future. It is planned the vacancies will be resourced throughout the next 2-3 months.

As previously reported, the Resourcing Deployment panel chaired by the Director of 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 55.00 fte officers have joined the force in quarter 3 (October to December 2023). This was made up of 54.00 fte new recruits that joined on the 18th December 2023 and 1.00 fte re-joiner.

The total recruitment for the full financial year to date (April to December 2023) is 203. This is made up 180 new recruits, 17 transfers in, 3 returners and 3 re-joiners. Of the 180 new recruits, 73 joined under the traditional Initial Police Learning & Development Programme (IPLDP), 39 Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA), 38 Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP), 16 DHEP Investigate First, 9 PCDA Investigate First and 5 IPLDP Investigate First.

Police Uplift Programme Headcount Position (includes officers on career break)

The force headcount as at 31st December 2023 was 3819, which is 54 higher than the minimum headcount requirement of 3765.

As reported last quarter, on top of the additional recruitment of +45, the force has 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. This continues to be a focus for the force and every

effort is being taken to ensure that this position is achieved against a backdrop of less viable candidates in the process than would be preferential.

It is worth noting that the force has had confirmation that for the 2024/25 financial year the maintenance headcount requirement is officially set at 3810. This is the original maintenance headcount requirement of 3765 and the additional recruitment allocation of 45 (totalling 3810). The recruitment plan for 2024/25 has been set, which results in the minimum headcount of 3810 being achieved in both September 2024 and March 2025.

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 December 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	2054	272	13.24%	843	41.04%
Apr-23	101	11	10.89%	29	28.71%
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	257	39	15.18%	101	39.30%
Sep-23	167	21	12.57%	69	41.32%
Oct-23	129	16	12.40%	59	45.74%
Nov-23	223	41	18.39%	79	35.43%
Dec-23	180	30	16.67%	68	37.78%
2023/24 YTD Total	1465	215	14.68%	557	38.02%

The table demonstrates that in quarter 3 of this financial year there have been a total of 532 applications. Positively, this is higher than quarter 3 of both the previous 2 years (501 in 2022 and 341 in 2021). In addition, the total applications in November 2023 (of 223) is the second highest number of applications for this month over the last 7 years (only bettered by 287 applications in November 2020).

With regards to ethnicity, the total proportion of applications from ethnic minority candidates is 14.68%, which is

higher than each of the previous 4 financial years. Of note, the total proportion of applications from ethnic minority candidates in November 2023 of 18.39%, is the second highest ever monthly proportion (since records began in January 2017).

With regards to gender, the total proportion of applications from female candidates is 38.02%. 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%). Of note, the total proportion of applications from female candidates in October 2023 of 45.74% is the highest since September 2022 (49.72%) and the 8th highest ever proportion since records began in January 2017.

Diversity – Ethnicity

Of the total 55 joiners in quarter 3, a total of 3 (5.45%) were ethnic minority. For the financial year to date, a total of 203 officers have joined, of which 11 were ethnic minority (5.42%). This represents a small improvement when compared to the 2022/23 financial year (4.74%).

For information, the 5.45% ethnic minority joiners is 5.70 percentage points below the 2021 economically active population (EAP) of Essex (11.15%). However, positively, the ethnic minority application proportion for April to December 2023, is 14.68% (3.39 percentage points higher).

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) and the current financial year to date (April to December 2023).

Ethnicity Group	2023/24 YTD: Apr to Dec 23			2022/23		2021/22		2020/21	
	H'Count	% of Total Ethnic Minority	% of Total Joiners	% of Total Ethnic Minority	% of Total Joiners	% of Total Ethnic Minority	% of Total Joiners	% of Total Ethnic Minority	% of Total Joiners
Asian / Asian British	4	36.36%	1.97%	35.00%	1.65%	48.15%	3.49%	27.59%	2.60%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	1	9.09%	0.49%	10.00%	0.47%	25.93%	1.88%	24.14%	2.27%
Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	5	45.45%	2.46%	50.00%	2.36%	18.52%	1.34%	41.38%	3.90%
Other Ethnic Group	1	9.09%	0.49%	5.00%	0.24%	7.41%	0.54%	6.90%	0.65%
Total	11	100.00%	5.42%	100.00%	4.73%	100.00%	7.26%	100.00%	9.42%

Of the 11 ethnic minority joiners, 4 are Asian / Asian British (1.97%), 1 is Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (0.49%), 5 are Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups (2.46%) and 1 identified as Other Ethnic Group (0.49%). Positively, all three represent an improvement when compared to the last financial year.

With regards to force level officer representation, whilst there have been 3 joiners over this period, the overall ethnic minority headcount has reduced by 1 (from 154 as at 30th September 2023 to 153 as at 31st December 2023). This is a percentage point decrease of 0.04 (from 4.05% to 4.01%).

The overall headcount and proportion has reduced 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, it is expected the proportion of ethnic minority candidates will increase from the March 2024 intake and beyond.

With regards to the recruitment pipeline, as at 2nd January 2024, there were a total of 326 candidates in the selection process, of which 38 are ethnic minority candidates (11.66%). Of the 38 ethnic minority candidates in process, 8 are being progressed towards the March 2024 intake. Whilst candidates may drop out of the process for reasons such as failing vetting clearances, if all 8 joined this would equate to 11.76% of the total intake of 68.

Diversity - Gender

With regards to gender, of the 203 joiners this financial year to date (April to December 2023), a total of 83 were female (40.89%). 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 reduced marginally from 1422 / 37.35% as at 30th September 2023 to 1421 / 37.28% at 31st December 2023. However, it should be noted, that whilst it has reduced marginally over this quarter, the current headcount and proportion is higher than any previous end of financial year position on record.

With regards to the recruitment pipeline, as at 2nd January 2024, there were 135 female candidates in progress, which equates to 41.41% of all candidates. This is higher than the current force proportion of 37.28% and marginally below the 2021 Essex female EAP of 47.65%.

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 50 outreach / recruitment events to promote policing as a career choice between 1st October and 30th November 2023. These have occurred in a wide variety of venues and locations such as Universities, Colleges, Schools and Jobcentres, using Census 2021 and other demographic data, to maximise applications from the most diverse group of people possible.
- The force has retained 76 Recruitment Ambassadors, recruited from a variety of commands and teams. HR have recently engaged command leads to provide a single point of contact to brigade ambassador activity and outreach / recruitment engagement opportunities locally. 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. We continue to use authentic case studies of serving Essex Police officers to attract recruits and we 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 86 recruitment buddies currently supporting 75 recruit applicants.
- The Positive Action Team are working in partnership with Essex County Council on pathway/promotional/case study advertisements. The ECC Magazine has now been created and this will be a double page spread for Edition 4. 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, Positive Action, Community Policing Team's and their Community Support Engagement Officers. 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.

Future Recruitment Plan

The next intake is scheduled for the 29th March 2024 and is currently set at 65, however, this is subject to change depending on factors such as variations in attrition.

At time of writing, there are 3 candidates cleared for the March 2024 intake. In addition, there are 45 candidates in the pre-employment (clearance) stage, excluding those 'on hold' due to vetting, medical issues, or other matters (of which there are 48). In addition, there are a total of 188 candidates in pre-selection. Noting the current pass rates, it is projected a further 49 candidates, currently undertaking the assessment processes will be viable for the March 2024 intake within the necessary timeframes. This will create a total of 97 (3 cleared, 45 already in process, 49 additional potentials) viable candidates in pre-employment for the March intake of 65.

Officers transferring into force, along with re-joiners and returners remains a key focus for the force to assist in ensuring the force achieves the required resourcing level by 31st March 2024. The original projection for quarter 4 for officers joining via these entry routes was 4.00 fte. However, positively, at the time of writing there were already 5.00 fte confirmed over this period (1.00 fte January 2024 and 4.00 fte February 2024).

All departments within the recruitment process continue to push forward and prioritise activity to secure the candidates for 29th March 2024 intake, with oversight through corporate recruitment and Head of Resourcing.

The 2024/25 recruitment plan has been set and is based on an assumption of 23.00 fte leavers a month and a requirement to achieve a headcount of 3810 in both September 2024 and March 2025. The plan is made up of 4 intakes totalling 243.00 fte (June: 55.00, September: 65.00, December: 64.00, March 62.00) and a total of 18.00 fte transferees / re-joiners / returners).

Turnover

So far this financial year to date, a total of 201 officers have left the force. This is a turnover rate of 5.27% and is lower than the same period in 2022 (215 / 5.85%).

It was reported in the last update that quarter 2 turnover had increased due to a spike seen in August 2023. However, over the last quarter (October to December 2023), attrition has reduced significantly. For this period, the projected attrition was set at 23 a month (total of 69), however, there have been just 50 leavers, which is an average of approximately 17 a month. The total leavers for this quarter (50), is significantly lower than the same period last year (76) and represents the second lowest level of leavers for quarter 3 over the last 10 years.

Overall, for the financial year to date (April to December 2023), there have been a total of 201 leavers, which is an average of 22 a month and marginally under the projection of 23 a month.

With regards to ethnicity, a total of 14 ethnic minority officers have left so far this financial year to date (April to December 2023). Whilst this is relatively high it is marginally lower than the same period last year (15). Of the 14 leavers, 7 resigned, 2 transferred to other forces, 2 were ill-health retired, 1 retired and 2 were dismissed. Of the 7 resignations, detailed analysis identifies no specific areas of concern with a range of detailed reasons for leaving provided.

Looking forward there are currently no confirmed ethnic minority leavers for January 2024 and 1 confirmed for February 2024.

With regards to gender, a total of 74 female officers have left for the period April to December 2023, which is higher than the same period last year (60). Of the 74 leavers, 51 resigned, 10 retired, 8 transferred to another force, 3 ill-health retired and 2 were dismissed. The total leavers of 74 equates to a turnover rate of 5.22%, which is higher than the same period in each of the previous 4 financial years (average of 4.19%). However, for information, the current turnover of 5.22% is not a complete outlier as this is lower than both 2016 (7.07%) and 2017 (5.66%) and comparable to 2018 (5.22%).

Whilst turnover for female officers is high, detailed exit analysis shows a wide range of reasons for leaving were provided with no specific areas of concern identified. This is demonstrated by the fact that of 59 resignations / transfers for this period, 14 different primary reasons for leaving were provided. For information, of the 59 resignations / transfers, unhappy at work accounted for the highest with 10 (this was also the primary reason for leaving in 2022/23). This was then followed by work life balance (8), financial reasons (6), personal circumstances (6) and 5 each for securing alternative employment for aspirational reasons, prefer not to say, other and relocation.

The force Retention Ambassador programme continues to deliver effective early interventions. To date (up to 29th December 2023) there are 33 ambassadors across 12 commands, covering a wide range of roles and ranks (from Constable to Chief Supt). Of the 33 Retention Ambassadors, 17 are female (52%) and 2 are from an ethnic minority (6%).

There have been 46 interventions with individuals since June 2023. Only 7 of the individuals have, to date, proceeded to leave the organisation and only a further 9 indicate an ongoing intention to do so. This indicates a 67% retention success rate following an intervention. The most frequent subject of referral is 'posting' accounting for 9 of the 46 and 'disillusionment' accounting for 6.

An ongoing programme of Retention Ambassador training and CPD events is planned to continue throughout 2024. Leadership Training Team are fully involved in delivering this support which draws upon coaching and mentoring content and skills.

Police Officer Promotions

During the last quarter (October to December 2023), a promotional process for Constable to Sergeant was completed, which resulted in 43 officers successful for promotion. A further 17 officers were successful at the promotion validation discussion, however their future promotion will be subject to passing the casefile

assessment at their second attempt in January 2024. Therefore, the total promotion pool for promoting to the rank of Sergeant, may reach 60, with all successful officers completing the Be The Change course, ahead of starting their promotional postings in April – May 2024.

In January 2024, a promotion process for the Assistant Chief Constable – Public Protection and Criminal Justice was launched, with the assessment process due to complete by the end of February 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).

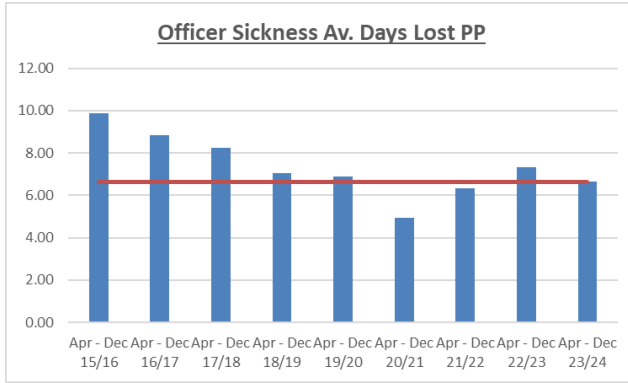
Category	Rank	2022/23					2023/24		
		Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Total	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
Promotion (inc Tmp Promotions)	Chief Superintendent			1		1	1		
	Superintendent	3				3			1
	Chief Inspector	3				3	2	7	1
Promoted Total		6	0	1	0	7	3	7	2
Transferred	Chief Officer				2	2			
	Chief Superintendent		1		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

The table demonstrates that in quarter 3 of 2023/24, there were only 3 senior officers changing roles. Of those, 2 were promoted (1 into the rank of Chief Inspector and 1 into Superintendent) and 1 Chief Inspector transferred roles (from Staff Officer to CC to Local Policing Support Unit).

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 December 2023 is 6.63 days, which is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (7.34). It should be noted that whilst the average days lost per officer is higher than the same period in 2021 (6.32) and 2020 (4.94), the current position of 6.63 is positive and in fact lower than the same period in each financial year from 2015 to 2019. This can be demonstrated in the graph over page.



The red line indicates the current financial year to date average days lost per officer (6.63). 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 December 2023, as well as the same period in 2022 and 2021.

Employee Group	2021/22 (Apr to Dec)		2022/23 (Apr to Dec)		2023/24 (Apr to Dec)		Variance 2023/24 v 2022/23		Variance 2023/24 v 2021/22	
	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	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost
Police	178955.17	3.90%	215666.31	4.52%	202038.14	4.07%	-13628.17	-0.45%	23082.97	0.17%

The figures demonstrate that there has been a reduction in the percentage of contracted hours lost to sickness for April to December 2023 (4.07%) when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.52%).

With regards to absence terms, there has been a reduction in average days lost per person across all three for the period April to December 2023 when compared to the same position in 2022. Short-term has reduced from 2.13 to 1.93, medium-term from 1.12 to 0.96 and long-term from 4.09 to 3.74.

Psychological related absences continue to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (40.48%), which is an increase compared to same period in 2022 (39.71%). However, when measured as average days lost per person it is 2.68, which represents a reduction when compared to the previous year (2.92). For information, whilst it has reduced it is still higher than the same period in both 2021 (2.35) and 2020 (2.00), however as previously reported, overall absence was lower in these periods.

Of note, musculo/skeletal related absences no longer account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (which it did for the April to September 2023 position). So far, for April to December 2023, 12.11% of absence was lost to musculo/skeletal reasons, which is still an increase when compared to the same period in 2022 (10.24%) and 2021 (11.78%). This is also reflected in the average days lost per person, which was 0.80 for this period compared to 0.75 in 2022 and 0.74 in 2021.

Respiratory related absences once again account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost with 14.73%, as it did for the full 2022/23 report and the April to June 2023 update. However, this is a reduction when compared to 2022 (20.96%). When measured as average days lost per person it is also the second highest absence reason and has reduced to 0.98 from 1.54.

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

- Only 4 have increased by more than 0.01 average days lost per person, which are digestive related absences, genito urinary related absences, miscellaneous related absences and musculo/skeletal related absences.
- 2 have increased by just 0.01 average days lost per person (headache / migraine and infectious disease)
- Nervous system absences have reduced by 0.10, followed by infectious disease absence, which have reduced by 0.05 and cardiac/circulatory related absences and ear/eye related absence, which have both reduced by 0.03.
- Psychological related absences have reduced by 0.23 average days lost per person, with the most significant reduction being respiratory related absence (a reduction of 0.56) as identified above.

With regards to Commands, of the 20, a total of 6 have higher average days lost per person in the period April to December 2023 when compared to April to December 2022. However, of those, 1 is a Commands with an average headcount 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 4, the biggest increase is Criminal Justice, which has gone from 5.03 average days lost person to 8.13 (an increase of 3.10), followed by Local Policing Support Unit (from 6.22 to 6.94) and then Student Constables (from 2.11 to 2.53).

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 December 2023 for commands with average headcounts of more than 10. However, it should be noted that, positively, two 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 13.92. However, positively they have seen a reduction in absence when compared to the same position in 2022 (reducing by 1.34 average days lost per person from 15.26 to 13.92). Criminal Justice has the second highest level of absence with 8.13, and this has increased from 5.03 and is also a relatively 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 (8.07) however, this is a reduction of 2.01 when compared to the same period in 2022 (10.08).

Of the Local Policing Areas (LPAs), the average days lost person has reduced in both LPA North (from 8.23 to 7.91) and LPA South (from 6.84 to 5.97). In contrast however, LPA West have increased from 6.48 to 6.86.

For LPA West, the increase for April to December 2023, when compared to the same period last year, is an increase of 1225 payroll hours lost, which can largely be attributed to an increase of 3301 payroll hours lost for psychological related absence and an increase of 1560 payroll hours for digestive related absence. However, these are also offset by significant reductions in some other absence reasons, most notably -2228 hours for musculo/skeletal related absence and -2014 hours for respiratory related absence.

Adjusted and Recuperative Duties

The number (headcount) of officers on recuperative and adjusted duties has increased from 496 as at 30th September 2023 to 523 as at 31st December 2023. This equates to 13.72% of the total force headcount as at 31st December 2023 (3812). The only significant variations across any of the commands have been increases in OPC (from 25 to 35) and LPA North (from 97 to 105)

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 31st December 2023 was 2106.29 fte, which is -240.25 fte under the establishment of 2346.54 and equates to a vacancy rate of 10.24%.

Whilst the fte is only marginally higher when compared to the last update as at 30th September 2023 (2105.34 fte), the vacancy rate has reduced by 1.36 percentage points (from 11.60%). This is due to a net reduction in establishment of 35.12 fte (from 2381.66 to 2346.54). The net reduction relates to a -44.30 fte in Crime & Public Protection Command, -0.89 fte in Serious Crime Directorate, -0.93 fte and +11.00 in Professionalism. Note the increase in Professionalism was linked to the Crime & Public Protection structure change, which resulted in the Disclosure Officers and Service Desk from within the Operations Centre moving into the Professionalism.

As reported last quarter, the Command with the highest vacancy rate is Learning & Development (-29.74%), however this has reduced marginally compared to last quarter (-31.44%). Human Resources were identified as having the second highest vacancy rate last quarter however this has reduced from -17.75% to -13.05% and no longer appears in the top 3 highest vacancy rates. The Serious Crime Directorate continue to have a high vacancy rate (-16.29%), however this is marginally lower when compared to last quarter (-17.75%). Continuous Improvement and Analytics make up the top 3 Commands as identified on the HR Strategic Dashboard (-13.13%), however, this is also marginally lower than last quarter (-13.94%).

Positively, of the remaining Commands (those with a headcount of greater than 10), Support Services is the only Command to have an increase, albeit that was marginal (from -12.31% to -12.58%). Essex Criminal Justice have seen the most significant

reduction (from -10.75% to -7.72%), followed by Operational Policing Command (from -15.37% to -12.98%).

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:

Learning & Development Posts (various teams): A total of 9.56 fte posts are activity being recruited to and are at various stages of the recruitment and selection process and 4.76 fte posts are being given up as part of the 2024/25 savings.

Business Services: vacancies have been through recruitment processes, and most have been selected for with candidates in pre-employment checks. The Command are working with vetting to expedite the process and attrition has reduced meaning that the vacancies are not continuing to increase.

Estates: Estates continue to have several 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 the command and corporate recruitment have worked together with specialist agencies and with external job boards to supply individuals for engineer, surveyor and estates positions. At the time of writing, there were 3 external candidates undergoing pre-employment checks and 2 roles at shortlisting stage. Other vacancies have not had any successful candidates and will be re-advertised.

Forensics: the command has been subject to a business case, which went live on 31st July 2023. Vacancies have been advertised and the majority have been selected for, with candidates in pre-employment checks.

Roads Policing: majority of vacancies are in Process Support Officers roles, which have been advertised. However, some vacancies remain following the recruitment process, and these will be re-advertised. Other vacancies are in the Prosecution Support Officer roles, these have also been advertised and interviews took place recently with candidates awaiting selection.

Continuous Improvement and Analytics: whilst the vacancy rate remains high, it has reduced. Vacancies have been advertised and there are currently 4 external individuals in pre-employment checks for posts and 1 internal candidate awaiting a start date. Recruitment remains ongoing into other vacancies with some interviews due to take place imminently.

In addition to the above departments, there are also a number of roles with high levels of vacancies. The most notable are in the roles of Senior Communications Officer however this role is being removed as part of the Contact Management Business case and replaced by a new role, which is currently being selected for. Similarly, there are vacancies within the Communications Officer role, which is changing to a dual role as part of the aforementioned business case, with the next intake due for March 2024 of up to 30.00 fte. In addition, there are vacancies in the roles of PNC Support Officer and Customer Contact Administrator, which are actively being recruited to.

With regards to PCSOs, the strength fte has reduced marginally from 96.29 fte as at 30th September 2023 to 95.98 fte (-3.09 under the establishment of 99.07). This is a vacancy rate of -3.12%. The force is holding an 11.00% vacancy rate on PCSOs, therefore there are no plans to recruit at this stage.

Diversity - Ethnicity and Gender

With regards to staff, the number of ethnic minority staff has remained at 95. However, as a proportion of the total staff workforce it has reduced marginally from 4.11% as at 30th September 2023 to 4.10 as at 31st December 2023. With regards to gender, the headcount and proportion has increased from 1559 / 67.37% as at 30th September 2023 to 1564 / 67.50%. This is a headcount increase of 5 and percentage point increase of 0.13.

With regards to PCSOs, the ethnic minority headcount has remained at 0. The number of female PCSOs has reduced by 1 from 68 to 67, and as a proportion against the total PCSO headcount from 64.15% to 63.81%.

Turnover

So far this financial year to date (April to December 2023), a total of 188 staff have left, which is a turnover rate of 8.09%. This is lower than the same period last year (235 / 10.12%).

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.

As reported last quarter, there was a spike in attrition in the month of September 2023 (36), which was then followed by a further 30 leavers in October 2023. However, positively, attrition reduced significantly in November 2023 (11) and December 2023 (14). For information, the 11 leavers in November 2023 is the lowest number in this month going back to 2009 and the December leavers of 14, is lower than 7 out of the 8 previous Decembers going back to 2015.

Positively the trend of reduced attrition is continuing with just 19 leavers confirmed for January 2024. Whilst this is subject to change, if the leavers for January 2024 remains at 19, this would be lower than both January 2023 (24) and January 2022 (27).

Focusing on the full financial year to date (April to December 2023), of the 188 leavers, a large proportion (50 / 26.60%) are from Contact Management. However, Contact Management is one of the biggest Commands in force and has always historically had relatively high levels of turnover, therefore this is not deemed an outlier or area of concern. In fact, positively, the 50 leavers for this period represents a significant reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 where 72 left.

Other departments with high numbers of leavers (measured as headcount) are Business Services (16), however this is also lower than the same period in 2022 (25), as well as Custody (12 leavers) and IT (10 leavers), both of which are only marginally higher than the same period in 2022.

For PCSOs, there have just been just 3 leavers this financial year to date (April to December 2023). This is the lowest level of leavers for this period since the reduced establishment took effect in 2017.

Absence

With regards to staff absence, the average days lost per person for April to December 2023 is 6.83, which is slightly higher than the same period in 2022 (6.53).

The below table shows the total payroll hours lost and the percentage of available contracted hours lost for April to December 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 and 2021:

Employee Group	2021/22 (Apr to Dec)		2022/23 (Apr to Dec)		2023/24 (Apr to Dec)		Variance 2023/24 v 2022/23		Variance 2023/24 v 2021/22	
	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	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost
Staff	120069.14	4.61%	111579.16	4.34%	117151.77	4.53%	5572.61	0.19%	-2917.36	-0.08%

The figures demonstrate that 4.53% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence for April to December 2023, which is a slight increase when compared to the same period in 2022 (4.34%) but a slight reduction when compared to April to December 2021 (4.61%).

With regards to absence term, there has been an increase in long-term absence (from 3.14 average days lost per person to 3.67) but reductions in short-term and medium-term absence.

For staff, psychological related absence continues to account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (28.84%), and the average days lost per person has increased slightly from 1.88 for April to December 2022 to 1.97 for April to December 2023. Respiratory related absences account for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost (16.17%) but the average days lost per person has reduced from 1.75 for April to December 2022 to 1.10 for the same period in 2023.

There have been fluctuations in the 12 general absence reasons, and 6 categories have increased by more than 0.04 average days lost per person (cardiac/circulatory, digestive, ear/eye, genito urinary, miscellaneous and nervous system).

Miscellaneous absence has increased by the most and the main reason for the increase is due to cancer (+3119 hours) and operations (+526 hours).

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

- Cardiac/circulatory: operation (+1702 hours), hospital treatment (+1456 hours) and chest pains (+905 hours)
- Digestive: inflammatory bowel disease (+1198 hours), gall bladder problems (+350 hours) and stomach pain (+225 hours)
- Ear/eye: dizziness (+1002 hours) and Menieres disease (+527 hours)

- Genito urinary: post operative recovery (+1102 hours), hysterectomy (+417 hours) and endometriosis (+415 hours)
- Nervous system: seizure (+1567 hours)

Of the 19 Commands, 7 have higher average days lost per person for April to December 2023 when compared to the same period in 2022.

Contact Management have remained the Command (of those with higher average headcounts) with the highest average days lost per person (9.81). Positively, this is lower than the same period in 2022 (10.75) and 2021 (11.12). The average headcount in Contact Management (528) accounts for 22.76% of the total staff headcount and the Command is consistently in the top 3 Commands 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 (33.67%) and respiratory related absence (17.56%).

Crime and Public Protection Command (C&PP) has the second highest average days lost per person for April to December 2023 with 7.44, which is an increase when compared to the same period in 2022 (5.36). The absence reasons that account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost in C&PP are psychological related absence (25.67%) and miscellaneous absence (16.61%).

Criminal Justice Command remain the Command with the third highest average days lost per person at 7.25. However, this is a reduction when compared to the same period in 2022 (7.33), 2021 (924) and 2020 (7.26). The reasons that account for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost in Criminal Justice Command are psychological related absence (32.96%), respiratory related absence (15.86%) and musculo/skeletal related absences (15.17%).

For PCSOs, the average days lost per person has increased to 10.18 for April to December 2023, which is an increase of 2.37 when compared to the same period in 2022 (7.80). However, this is lower than the same period in 2021 (11.26).

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

Employee Group	2021/22 (Apr to Dec)		2022/23 (Apr to Dec)		2023/24 (Apr to Dec)		Variance 2023/24 v 2022/23		Variance 2023/24 v 2021/22	
	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	Payroll Hours Lost	% of Available Contracted Hrs Lost
PCSO	9162.02	7.37%	6031.76	5.18%	7830.70	6.75%	1798.94	1.58%	-1331.32	-0.62%

The figures demonstrate that 6.75% of contracted hours available were lost to sickness absence for April to December 2023, which is an increase when compared to the same period in 2022 (5.18%) but a reduction to 2021 (7.37%).

For PCSOs, psychological related absence accounts for the highest proportion of payroll hours lost (33.43%), followed by musculo/skeletal related absence (18.26%).

In terms of average days lost per person psychological absence has increased from 0.74 for April to December 2022 to 3.40 for the same period in 2023 and average days lost for musculo/skeletal related absence have increased to 1.86 from 0.79.

Although psychological related absence accounts for the highest proportion and average days lost per person for PCSOs for April to December 2023 there are only 22 instances of absence within this category. The main reason for psychological absence is due to stress, which accounts for 78.39% of the payroll hours lost in this category. This is followed by anxiety, which accounts for 14.56%. Of the individuals that have been absent for psychological related absence, 5 remained absent from work at the time of writing the report (9th January 2024).

Musculo/skeletal related absence accounts for the second highest proportion of payroll hours lost, but there have only been 14 instances of this absence in April to December 2023 and the highest proportion of payroll hours lost for this absence relates to broken bones (48.47%) and fractures (31.14%). Of these, only 2 individuals remain absent from work at the time of writing (9th January 2024).

Restricted Duties

The number of staff on restricted duties has reduced marginally from 73 as at 30th September 2023 to 71 as at 31st December 2023 and PCSOs have remained static at 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 senior leadership advice and guidance at local Attendance and Wellbeing Management Group Meetings (AWMG) across all Commands and Departments.

As at 28 December 2023, the number of formal stages for both Unsatisfactory Performance Procedures (UPP) or Capability are consistently being applied with 55 formal processes. PIU and Operational HR provide professional advice and intervention to managers in support of this process. In recognition of the slightly increased picture for police staff absence, all HR Business Partners are working with their local commands and departments to identify the areas where increases are most prevalent and to look for opportunities to influence return to work options.

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 has now developed into a rotating review cycle with local absence scrutiny actions following the Star Chamber being supported by both Operational HR and PIU. In addition, the Director of HR has held a specific absence star chamber to review

probationer absence in police officers and assess our support and interventions at the earliest possible point.

Senior Staff Movement / Transfers (P05 Roles and Above)

With regards to senior police staff movement / transfers, in quarter 3 (October to December 2023) there has been 1 external joiner into the role of Head of Research & Analysis.

Internally, during this period, a total of 3 staff have transferred into P05 roles or above. They were into the roles of Talent & People Development Manager, Head of Information Strategy & Assurance and Head of Investigative Skills Progression.

Business Case Update

During the period 1st October 2023 to 31st December 2023, 7 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 October 2023 to 31st December 2023:

- **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 were reviewed and submitted for consideration to Chief Officers. 33 staff are affected by this business case; all were subject to redeployment. The business case came into effect on 18th October 2023 with the removal of the Assessment Centre. Of the 33 staff, 6 were made redundant, 24 staff were redeployed into new roles and 3 left the organisation ahead of the end of their notice period.
- **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 and staff commenced 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. The new shift pattern commenced 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; one left the organisation ahead of the end of the notice period and the other was made redundant on 22nd November 2023.

One business case has concluded consultation and remains in implementation/notice period pending start date of new structures during this period:

- **Contact Management Command:** Proposal to amend the Operating Model including the creation of new roles. 45-day consultation launched on 10th July 2023. Consultation closed on 24th August 2023. 36 counter proposals submitted, which were considered, the business case was re-issued with amendments on 27th October 2023. 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 has been ongoing during November/December 2023. 2 supervisors have been displaced from the process and have redeployment status; all other staff have been allocated a new role in the structure. There were promotional opportunities within the new structure, resulting in 11 PSEs being promoted within the command; demonstrating career progression for police staff. The Target Operating Model comes into effect on 1st April 2024.

Four business case launched during this period:

- **Operational Policing Command:** Business Case to remove one police staff post from the Specialist Operations Department. Consultation closed on 6th December 2023. One affected member of staff given notice and redeployment status until 7th March 2024.
- **SCD Holmes shift:** Consultation commenced 13th November 2023 with the proposal to remove shift working arrangements and associated allowances for two Disclosure Officers at Grade SO1. There are no job losses proposed. No counter proposals were received, and outcomes were confirmed 18th December 2023. The end of the notice period and move to the changed contracts is 17th March 2024.
- **SCD MSHT:** Consultation commenced on 16th November 2023 to remove 4.00 fte Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Investigator Scale 6 posts. (This affects five individuals). Consultation closed on 18th December 2023 and a number of counter proposals and individual submissions were reviewed and considered. Confirmation of the new structure and the loss of the roles was confirmed to individuals on the 22nd December 2023 and individual outcomes confirmed on 3rd January 2024. Individuals commence notice and redeployment status from this point until 2nd April 2024.
- **SCD Intelligence Bureau:** Consultation to standardise shift patterns and improve efficiencies for 62 staff (34 Essex/28 Kent) commenced 20th November 2023. There are no job losses, and all employees will remain on current shift allowances, thus, although this does not contribute to current savings plans, this large project is being managed via the agreed business case process. Consultation closed 18th December 2023 and the department has entered into an extended review period to consider counter proposals, individual submissions and flexible working requests. Outcomes will be confirmed 8th March 2024 with the end of the notice period and move to the new shift pattern being 9th June 2024.

Specials Headcount and Turnover

As at 31st December 2023, there were 266 specials in post on SAP, which is a net reduction of 17 when compared to the position as at 30th September 2023 (283). As previously reported the net reduction continues to be a combination of turnover and a reduction in recruitment.

With regards to attrition, there have been 85 leavers so far this financial year to date (April to December 2023). This is an average of just 7 a month, which is lower than the yearly average in each of the previous 4 financial years.

Of the 85 leavers over this period, the majority (70 / 82.35%) resigned, with 12 (14.12%) joining Essex police as a new officer recruit, 2 retiring and 1 failing their probation. Of note, whilst the overall turnover is much lower during this period, the proportion of specials leaving to join Essex police as a new officer recruit (14.12%) is much lower than the 2022/23 financial year (31.18%).

The previous quarterly update identified that from October 2019 to September 2023 there was a national reduction in specials of 36.33% with Essex slightly higher at 42.45%. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, national data is currently not available beyond September 2023, therefore it is not possible to determine if the latest reduction in special numbers seen this quarter in Essex, is in line with the national position. Subject to the data becoming available, an update will be provided in the April 2024 update.

Specials Duty Hours

A total of 60,778 duty hours were worked for the period April to December 2023, which equates to 23.52 average hours per officer. As expected, due to the overall lower headcount this is a reduction when compared to the same period last year (66,934 hours worked / average of 26.78 per officer). For information, the total duty hours worked in December 2023 of 6,684 is the equivalent of 418 specials working a 16-hour month, which is an increase compared to the September 2023 position (6,065 / 379).

Recruitment and Applications

In relation to recruitment, there have been 27 joiners so far this financial year to date (April to December 2023), which is marginally lower than the same period last year (31). Since the last update an intake of 7 joined on the 14th October 2023. Along with the September 2023 intake where 7 also joined, this is the highest intake since July 2022, where 9 joined.

With regards to applications, the monthly average for April to December 2023 was 26, which is lower than the same period last year (30).

Looking forward, the next intake is scheduled for 20th January 2024 of up to 6 joiners.

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, Colchester Police Station Discovery Event, Chelmsford College Progression Fair, Writtle University College Fresher's Fair, Wembley Stadium, Tottenham Hotspur stadium and Anglia Ruskin University. Schools and college events booked in alongside Corporate Recruitment, HR Innovation and Positive Action will also take place. Specials specific events being run by the new Taskforce (detailed below).

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 – most recent event saw over 30 people sign up to attend our virtual offering with a 26% attendance rate, feedback is being collected from those interested on reasons for non-attendance and also setting up calls to discuss the role with them individually.
- The Recruitment Taskforce has attended 3 events since beginning work in December, have 4 scheduled for January 2024 and currently 1 for February.
- 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.
- New Recruitment Taskforce has been set up and is operational, this is made up of Specials from across the county who are passionate about increasing the number of applications to join the Special constabulary and will be attending a lot of outreach events as well as helping to improve our web page, marketing tools.
- Updating the web pages with the media department to highlight the key information better, alongside the CSC, Transferee/Re-joiner routes.
- Getting more access to LinkedIn so the Specials adverts can be posted on there more regularly.

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 14 as at 30th September 2023 to 12 as at 31st December 2023, which is a percentage point reduction of 0.44 from 4.95% to 4.51%.

With regards to the number of female specials, the headcount has reduced from 83 (29.33%) as at 30th September 2023 to 75 (28.20%) as at 31st December 2023.

All Employee Groups Protected Characteristics

There are no significant variations to report when compared to September 2023. The April 2024 quarterly update will provide a more detailed update with regards to the 31st March 2024 position compared to the 31st March 2023.

The force are in 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 programme concluded in November 2023 with 719 vaccinations within the Flu Vaccination Programme being delivered in multiple locations across the Essex estate.

The Force Peer Support network continues to grow with 29 Peer Supporters now trained and providing support and signposting to colleagues. This process continues to sit alongside the well-embedded TRiM process for those potentially affected by trauma related to incidents they have attended or been involved in.

The Investigator Wellbeing sessions are continuing with 552 investigators now having attended the one-hour session and 245 managers having attended the one-day leader's programme. Once the initial roll out has concluded, these sessions will continue to be delivered and form part of the Counselling and Wellbeing business as usual to ensure new starters to these teams also receive this key input.

The NPCC Investigator Wellbeing Week (November 23) was supported again this year and in national recognition of the work undertaken in the support of investigator wellbeing in force, an input was provided by the Health and Wellbeing Delivery Manager at this national programme of events to explore the range of support offered by the force in this key area.

Health and Wellbeing Services continue to provide support in the area of Financial Wellbeing, which in November 2023 included the co-ordination of virtual wellbeing sessions provided by the Police Mutual Assurance Society (PMAS). These sessions included inputs on PMAS wellbeing services, healthcare, wills and estate planning and two sessions on effective cash management. In addition, the Financial Wellbeing hub continues to be updated with money saving advice and financial charities' information.

In late December 2023, the Counselling Team delivered a wellbeing session on Christmas Wellbeing, acknowledging that whilst the festive season provides

opportunities to enjoy the festivities, it can also be a challenge for people, from financial strain, the emphasis on family gatherings can be difficult for those who are estranged from their families or have experienced loss, the societal expectations to create a perfect holiday experience can contribute to feelings of loneliness or inadequacy and therefore the team provided a session of top tips for the festive period in support of colleagues across the organisation.

Learning and Development Update

Foundation Training

Since the introduction of the Police Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) in March 2022, 622 new officers have joined the force. The first Intake of the Degree Holder Entry Programme (DHEP) will finish their programme in March 2024 with officers joining on the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) entering the third year of their programme and moving towards the completion of their 'End Point Assessment'. The associated protected learning time (PLT) for year 3 of the PCDA has been carefully designed and mapped to mitigate an increase in frontline absences.

In December 2023, the College of Policing (COP) released the finalised optimised curricula for the existing PCDA, DHEP and the new Force-delivered unaccredited non-degree Police Constable Entry Programme (PCEP) as the fourth of the Police Constable Entry Routes (PCER), replacing the COP umbrella terminology of the PEQF. The Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) will no longer be available to Forces to deliver from the end of March 2024, replaced by the modernised PCEP. The optimised COP curricula for the suite of entry routes have been rationalised, with a stronger focus on the learning and assessment of vocational knowledge and skills.

The Learning and Development department are working closely with our partner, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) to maximise on opportunities for interoperability and efficiencies in the development of the optimised PCDA and DHEP and force delivered PCEP. The development of the reviewed programmes for Essex will be quality assured through the COP quality standards assessment process for the PCEP and the additional ARU academic validation process for the PCDA and DHEP for introduction in the Summer of 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 243 following the November 2023 NIE. Of the 36 candidates, 18 passed that exam a pass rate of 50%. Some outstanding results were achieved with a top score of 94%. The lower scores will be discussed with the individuals line management to establish the causes to ensure additional support and improvements in the next exam. At present, 70 candidates have indicated that they will sit the NIE in March 2024 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 January 2024, we now have 65 accredited specialist investigators registered with the College of Policing and a further 22 working toward this accreditation. These 22 have already received the required training course.

The crime training team are also trialling a new hybrid video recorded interview course (VRI) which can cater for 30 officers. The first course of this kind will take place in March 2024 and aims to ensure that backlogs for this type of essential training are kept to a minimum.

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 consists of 8 online e-learning modules and 3 classroom-based modules. Four members of the Essex Crime Training team attended the train the trainer event on 28th September 2023. Essex Police College continue to work with Crime and Public Protection Command and the first training is likely to commence in January 2024. This interim training bridges the gap ahead of the release of the new curriculum for the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigators Development Programme (SSAIDP2), which is due for release to forces by April 2024.

The Detective Development Team have developed a Post NIE Training Day. This was initially held in September and November shortly after the officers passed the NIE with short inputs including the role of the night DC, interviews (solicitors & special warning), CPIA, forensic considerations, victims, Investigations/FTAs, introduction to OneFile OCP. Feedback is very positive, and this course will continue for the foreseeable.

The Virtual Crime Academy (VCA) maintains its expansion and delivery of valuable support to investigators across all areas of business and has received over 26,285 visits in the last 90 days, this figure is lower than usual, likely due to the festive period of 2023. The VCA is currently undergoing a PIR (Performance Initial Review), which will look at all aspects of the platform, how it is performing and a review of all the content. Additionally, this will include a staff survey to engage with the users to identify changes to be made, where required. The review is being conducted by the Strategic Change Directorate and the results of the review will be available by the end of February 2024. Recent updates include Burglary and Robbery pages. The VCA continues to be used as a forum for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) delivery with a forward-facing programme being constantly planned and promoted. The Detective Career pathway is still utilised as the way forward for any recruitment and all applications and information is within these pages for ease of use for any new DC wishing to apply or take the exam in due course. All courses and news relevant to all DC's and lines of investigations are updated regularly and are found within the main landing page as well as any upcoming CPD events. No new pages are currently being planned until such time as the PIR has taken place as then the needs of the officers, whom the site serves, can be re-focused on.

Personal Safety and Taser Training

On 1st April 2024 the force will formally go-live with the scenario-based training for Police and Public Safety Training (PPST). This will provide officers with a three-day training package that includes the fitness test, emergency first aid, JESIP and a heavy focus on practical assessments for officer safety training, which has been

introduced into the current two-day refresher with excellent feedback. Work has been approved to carry out vital improvements to the current gym, which will see increased capacity and a cell relocation area to accommodate the increased capacity required.

The Force Strategic IAG has been attended by the Practical Skills Chief Inspector and members have been established for an IAG working group for Learning and Development, which will take place in January 2024. This will develop into members attending to observe training and providing feedback and the addition of youth IAG members, which will help to break down barriers and improve community relationships.

There are currently 95% of frontline Officers within the 90-day extension authorisation for PPST and 92% are trained within the year.

There are currently 721 Standard Trained Officers for Taser in Essex against the force establishment target of 737, further training is scheduled on a regular basis, with training records being closely managed to remove any officer that no longer requires the skill as part of their role.

Driver Training

There are now a total of 1,417 response drivers in the force, compared with 1,152 in May 2022 when the decision was made to invest in more driving instructors. The uplift in Driving Instructors has meant that there are far more response drivers than ever before. There is work to do to maintain the skill in the right area of LPT and this is now presented to the Force Resourcing Board to make decisions on allocation of courses to address where the need is.

It is anticipated that Driver training will meet the perfect profile by May 2024, at the latest, at which point focus will move back to instructor upskill to deliver other driving courses and look to deliver additional training in areas where the response times are longer, for example, Braintree and Uttlesford in North LPA.

Leadership Academy

The 'Be the Change' courses have three levels of training. These include the First Line Leaders course (FLL), which has seen 198 sergeants, 9 ready now PC/DCs and 55 police staff trained, the Middle Line Leaders course (MLL), which has trained 65 inspectors to date, and the Senior Line Leaders course (SLL), which has commenced training for 31 Chief Inspectors and 19 police staff.

There are changes expected through the Sergeant and Inspector Promotion and Progression (SIPP) workstream from the College of Policing in the next few years. The Leadership Academy (alongside the Professional Assessment Team and HR People Development) have a working group to stay abreast of the changes and ensure that the force is prepared for the proposed adaptations. A small number of forces are trialling SIPP (not Essex), and no changes are expected before 2027.

With regards to the Professional Assessment Team (PAT), there are currently 61 Sergeant candidates and 39 Inspectors in the assessment process. A further 60 Sergeants are due to start the 12-month programme in March 2024.

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

The completion of the online training for V6 of Athena continues ahead of the proposed go live date at the end of January 2024, with a completion rate of 69.60%. The Flex Training programme has been utilised to provide protected learning time for over 900 officers to complete these comprehensive eLearning packages. Time has also been allocated within the Flex calendar for officers to be trained in direct inputting for investigations on Athena to support the reduction on demand within the Resolution Centre and improve to Data Quality.

Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) training (the replacement of PNC) is progressing with the launch of the 'Wanted Persons' module due to go live in February/March 2024. Ongoing development has been completed by the Home Office on the existing training products for LEDS and the enhanced products will soon start to be released.

Learning and Development will work with the Home Office project team responsible for the replacement of ViSOR (Violent and Sex Offender Register) that is in the early stages of development. A force wide training needs assessment will be completed once the scope of the changes are known.

L&D continues to monitor the abstraction rates of officers and staff required to complete digitally based learning products at weekly Training Commissioning meetings chaired by the Head of L&D. This is to ensure that the training addresses the skills gaps identified and minimises abstraction wherever possible. This process will soon include products released by the College of Policing.

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 fairly positive with the required headcount expected to be achieved on 31st March 2024.

The representation of ethnic minority officers (4.01%) remains relatively strong as does the proportion of female officers (37.28%). 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 (December 2023) at 6,684, which is the equivalent of 418 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

As previously reported, the officer recruitment pipeline remains an ongoing risk. 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.

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
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 is not expected to happen in the immediate future. Whilst there has been a small increase in specials recruitment, overall, recruitment is low with ongoing attrition (albeit slightly reduced) contributing towards a declining position.

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

Expected Outcome: the proportion of ethnic minority officers has reduced marginally throughout the financial year. This is due to relatively low levels of recruitment (albeit this year is higher than last) and relatively high but stable turnover. However, subject to no significant spikes in attrition and the number of ethnic minority candidates being progressed towards the March 2024 intake, it is expected this position will start to improve.

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

Expected Outcome: whilst there has been a minor reduction in the proportion of female officers over the last quarter, application numbers remain strong and therefore it is expected the proportion of female officers will continue to improve.