
Chief Officer Group

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2 **Executive Summary**

On 21 March 2023, Baroness Casey published her review into conduct and standards within the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). This was following the murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 by a serving Metropolitan Police officer, which prompted the then Home Secretary to commission an immediate and full review into the force's culture and operations.

The review exposed significant and widespread cultural and organisational failings, some of which repeat the findings of racism and discrimination from previous reports (McPherson, 1999, Lammy, 2017¹, and Home Affairs Select Committee 2021²), whilst others highlight sexism, misogyny, and homophobia alongside systemic failings in the way the service is run and their ability to serve the people of London.

Whilst attentions remain on the MPS as they address these issues, Baroness Casey's review has affected all police forces in England and Wales, with Chief Constables committing to understanding and addressing the scale and nature of the same challenges in their own forces.

At Essex police, the direction and intentions of CC Harrington have been clear:

- To acknowledge the findings of the review and that they are not limited to the Metropolitan Police Service.
- To listen to the workforce, our partners and our public to understand their experiences, concerns, and reflections- providing a safe environment through which this can happen.
- To pause, reflect, and understand the position of Essex police.
- To identify areas of strength as well as areas requiring improvement.
- To communicate these and commit to improving where necessary, using our existing infrastructure to drive activity (policies, strategies, governance).

Consequently, a period of research and review has been undertaken across the force to establish, as far as possible, whether we face the same challenges and to the same degree as the MPS, and has involved the following:

- Direct engagement between chief officers and force leaders, as well as with IAG representatives, staff and officer support networks, and those not in a leadership position.
- Engagement between force leaders and their wider commands.
- Review of relevant material including independent staff surveys, federation surveys, internal surveys, HMICFRS and audit findings, internal data, as well as a review of feedback received through a range of channels.

¹ *The Lammy Review: An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System.* Published September 2017, [The Lammy Review \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/648222/the-lammy-review.pdf)

² *The McPherson Report: Twenty-two years on.* Published July 2021, [The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on - Home Affairs Committee - House of Commons \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/publications-and-reports/the-mcpherson-report-2021/)

This activity has so far highlighted the strength of feeling among the Essex Police workforce, at every level and across all roles. Not only in their concerns that we face similar challenges to the MPS, but in their pride and commitment to serving their public.

Although more work is required to fully understand the view of the Essex public, we are reassured and grateful that whilst our partners acknowledge that Essex Police may face some of the same challenges, they are committed to supporting us in this.

This reassurance is strengthened further by the independent external views about our performance and culture, most notably Professor Les Graham of Durham University who we have collaborated with for seven years to measure and understand the strength of feeling across our workforce in several areas. Having completed three force-wide surveys and four national surveys in this time, Professor Graham has commented that the results highlight a workforce within Essex Police who feel on average high levels of inclusivity in their work teams with a culture of valuing individuals and respecting difference. He adds that the force's communications around acceptable standards of behaviour and the need to overcome prejudice are seen as clear. Moreover, that the workforce reports experiencing a high average level of ethical leadership behaviour from their immediate supervisor, average levels of antagonism to diversity are low and internal motivation to overcome prejudice is reported as high. Additionally, Professor Graham comments that the results support the view that Essex Police has demonstrated its ability to achieve improvement for the workforce by being prepared to measure difficult topics and taking interesting in understanding and applying the findings.

Taking this into account, this report will outline what we have found in our own activity: the feelings of our workforce and partners, the strengths and weaknesses of our business, and where we must now focus our attentions for either improving or retaining the high standards we already hold. In this first version of the report, there are no formal recommendations, however our findings and proposals are intended to prompt discussion around future activity which, in due course, may become formalised through new or existing mechanisms. This activity falls predominantly in five areas throughout the report:

1. Use of data and information.
2. Maximising employee feedback.
3. Supporting our leaders.
4. Learning lessons.
5. Understanding our business.

3 *The Casey report: Setting the scene*

Baroness Casey's findings are wide-reaching and expose failings in almost all aspects of the way in which the MPS operate and has attracted responses from across the political and policing landscape.

- Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, has pledged that immediate and lasting improvements will be made to the way police forces vet new and existing employees.
- The Head of the College of Policing, CC Andy Marsh, has pledged to overhaul the leadership, training, and support given to police leaders to enable them to develop the values and cultures we strive for.
- The NPCC lead at the time, CC Martin Hewitt, expressed the commitment of all Chief Constables to embed behavioural change throughout their forces, and outlined how many of the concerns raised in the review are being addressed through existing workstreams which provide a mechanism for learnings to be captured and fully understood.

Importantly though, these challenges are not limited to policing, nor the public sector. Whilst discrimination has been highlighted in other public services recently, misogynistic and elitist cultures have also been exposed within the private sector.

A recent survey found that despite almost 40% of the NHS workforce being from a minority background, racism and discrimination were both evident on a large scale³ with 70% of those who'd experienced racism choosing not to report it for fear of reprisal and lack of procedural justice (BMA, 2022). At the same time, sexism, racism, homophobia, and bullying were all exposed within the Fire Service as recently as March this year (2023)⁴ whilst in the private sector, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) are in crisis after claims of sexual misconduct and a 'toxic culture'⁵, and Goldman Sachs are paying for years of sex-discrimination⁶. It is obvious that reforms are needed across public and private sector organisations, and that there are deep societal roots to such issues experienced in the workplace.

To understand the scale and nature of these challenges within Essex Police, we have invited feedback from all ranks and roles within the organisation, and it has been heartening to see how many have independently read or engaged with Baroness Casey's report. This internal paper has been driven largely by their willingness (and our partners' willingness) to share their thoughts and feelings, and by their strength of feeling about the standards we should aspire to within policing. As a result, we have been able to develop a rich understanding of experiences and perceptions which, combined, signify a collective commitment to ensuring Essex Police is inclusive and professional, and that policing remains a profession to be proud of. This degree of internal reflection is significant, as it provides a starting point for change and improvement.

Our internal strategies (including Diversity, Equality, and Inclusiveness; VAWG; Media and Communication; and Professionalism) are all based on a sound understanding through data and evidence, meaning we can be confident

³ [Delivering racial equality in medicine \(bma.org.uk\)](https://www.bma.org.uk).

⁴ [Values and culture in fire and rescue services - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\) – Home | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(HMICFRS\) – Home \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

⁵ [CBI suspends key activities after rape and sex assault allegations - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news)

⁶ [Goldman Sachs to pay \\$215m in sex discrimination case - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news)

in our aspirations to value difference. Likewise, our public trust and confidence survey, Durham staff survey, and federation surveys provide us with the voice of those we serve and those we employ.

Not for the first time, this is an opportunity not to be lost. To take stock, reflect on our culture, our processes, and our people, and to question whether we are doing everything we can to understand our operating context. And importantly, not to lose sight of Casey's findings nor the lived experiences that we *have* heard of from our workforce. To do this, we commit to incorporating our internal findings into existing governance and to growing our understanding of workforce feelings through a safe and accessible environment for open and honest discussion. This must be between all levels of the organisation, with a particular focus on creating an environment in which staff and officers feel comfortable and able to reach out to their senior leadership teams.

It must also be with a view to understanding the issues that have an external impact, as much as those that impact internally. We are fortunate that there is a good level of trust and confidence already within the Essex community⁷, and that independent assessments have found we have strong business processes in critical areas (vetting and counter corruption most notably⁸), but it is essential to recognise where there is similarity in organisational structure, and complexities of a changing workforce, that enabled the behaviours and culture that Casey identified in her report to manifest within the MPS.

For the purposes of our response in Essex, the findings of the review have been addressed as seven overarching themes which has allowed us to focus on key aspects of each, whilst also identifying where there is crossover.

1. **Discrimination.** Both within the service as well as towards the public.
2. **Community understanding and engagement.** Linked closely to our ability to serve and protect effectively.
3. **The culture within specialist commands.**
4. **Resourcing,** and the impact this has on the quality of policing.
5. **Accountability, scrutiny, and governance,** and the importance of engaging with processes that are designed to support Chief Constables in running legitimate, effective organisations.
6. **Misconduct and grievances,** and whether procedural justice is encouraged through robust and fair process.
7. **Business model and management.** Whether the right leadership, culture and processes exist for the police service to operate effectively.

Each of the seven themes has been reviewed in detail to assess the position in Essex Police against the below points:

- i) Feedback from staff, partners, and the public.
- ii) What the evidence says (data, inspections, other findings).
- iii) Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances.
- iv) Future risks, challenges, and opportunities.
- v) Future proposals over the short, medium, and long term.

It is important to note that our assessment of supporting evidence has been strongly driven by the feedback we received on each theme, with some themes naturally attracting more attention than others. Because of this, and

⁷ 75% of respondents to our independent perceptions survey indicated they think Essex Police are doing a good or excellent job.

⁸ Publication date of HMICFRS findings still to be confirmed.

the limitations in time, the report will provide different levels of detail in places. This should not be seen as a reflection of the relative scale or importance of a particular issue- this report is intended as a starting point for further work so draws on the main themes that were identified from this early stage.

4 Discrimination

Discrimination exists for some of our workforce, although we may struggle to see and hear it, and we could use our data more effectively to understand this. We are reassured that we are in a better position than that of the MPS as identified by Casey for disproportionality in our policing activity, although there are improvements that we could still make.

Our challenge now is ensuring we hear about all discrimination within the force so that we are in a position to address it and support our workforce effectively.

4.1 Findings from the MPS

The Casey report identified institutional homophobia, misogyny, sexism, and racism as well as other forms of discrimination. Among her published findings for discrimination were:

- We have found a culture of discrimination that takes many forms in the Met but is felt most acutely by those who cannot hide their differences from the White male norm, particularly people of colour and women. We have found racism, misogyny and homophobia in plain sight.
- We have also seen institutional misogyny, sexism and homophobia in the organisation and are concerned about those with other protected characteristics, in particular those with disabilities.
- This 'resistance to difference' emerges in a culture of bullying experienced by a significant minority of the organisation. Those who do not conform to the prevailing culture face discrimination, bullying and barriers to thriving and progressing in their careers.
- We have identified institutional homophobia, misogyny and racism in the Met. This can be seen in overt discrimination, mistreatment and abuse of LGBTQ+, women and Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers and staff; unfair outcomes for these groups inside the organisation as a result of bias in processes and systems and in attitudes and behaviours; unfair outcomes in communities that result from under protection, from over-policing, or from both; and a culture of downplaying and denial of discrimination and repeated unwillingness to accept and deal with institutional failures that let down Londoners.

Using data that was available to the MPS, Casey was able to identify an over representation of individuals from minority or protected groups in several areas:

- Those that self-identify as Black are 3.5 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the MPS than their white counterparts⁹.
- Those that self-identify as Black were over 3 times more likely to be handcuffed, 4.5 times more likely to have a baton used against them, and nearly 4 times as likely to have a Taser fired on them¹⁰.
- 58% of males under 18 who were strip searched were described as Black by the officer conducting the search¹¹.

4.2 Assessment of the position in Essex police

4.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

“We don’t all ‘get it’, particularly at a senior level”

Feedback from staff and officers was mixed. Whilst some officers and staff reported that discrimination exists within Essex Police (although not to the same levels found within the MPS), others reported that it wasn’t a behaviour they had experienced or witnessed themselves. This mixed feedback is not unsurprising given the personal nature of those behaviours however, it leaves no doubt that discrimination has been, and still is, experienced or witnessed within the force, through examples of racism, misogyny, and perceptions of positive discrimination based on protected characteristics. Notably, Essex employees identified a lack of focus on disability-related discrimination within Casey’s report despite it referencing the high proportion of grievances of this nature in the MPS.

4.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

Where Casey found a lack of confidence among black and female members of the community in London, the opposite can be found in Essex where 79% of ‘non-white’ respondents report having confidence in Essex police, compared to 75% of white respondents. Likewise, 76% of females report having confidence in Essex police compared to 74% of males¹². These are sentiments that were repeated by our IAG representatives meaning we can be confident in their reliability.

Similarly, **we are less disproportionate than the MPS for stop and search, but there is more to do** to meet our aspirations of removing disparity in line with our DE&I strategy. For example:

Use of stop and search. In Essex, individuals who self-identify as black are 2.6 times more likely to be stopped than White individuals¹³, which is slightly lower than the figure of 3.5 for the MPS¹⁴.

Arrests. Ethnic Minority individuals are just over 1.5 times more likely to be arrested than white individuals, rising to 2.3 times more likely for black individuals.

⁹ Met stop and search data – referenced in [BARONESS CASEY REVIEW Final Report \(met.police.uk\)](#)

¹⁰ Met use of force data – reference in [BARONESS CASEY REVIEW Final Report \(met.police.uk\)](#)

¹¹ [Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service - new analysis by the Children’s Commissioner for England | Children’s Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

¹² Public Views and Experience of Policing and Criminal Justice in Essex Q3 2022/23 Survey Results.

¹³ Stop and search data Q3 2022-23

¹⁴ Note that the figure for the MPS uses population data preceding the 2021 census data.

Use of force. For 2022/23 the proportion of individuals who have been subjects of the use of force continues to be higher for ethnic minorities compared to the rest of the community in Essex. 9.3% of subjects were recorded as black, which is 5.9 percentage points above the 3.4% black resident population in Essex.

To draw comparisons with national and MPS trends, data is only available for the financial year 2021/22¹⁵, however the findings show that use of force in Essex occurs at a lower rate against individuals identifying as black, than in the MPS or nationally. Importantly, individuals of black ethnicity are still over-represented in use of force in Essex:

Handcuffs: Individuals of black ethnicity and aged between 10 and 64 were 2.5 times more likely to be handcuffed by Essex Police than their white peers. Overall, black individuals accounted for 10% of all subjects where handcuffs were used in Essex, which compares to 14.9% nationally and 37.8% in the MPS.

Baton: Individuals of black ethnicity and aged between 10 and 64 were 6.5 times more likely to have a baton used against them by Essex Police than their white peers. Overall, black individuals accounted for 15.4% of all subjects where a baton was used in Essex, which compares to 20.1% nationally and 44.2% in the MPS.

Taser: Individuals of black ethnicity and aged between 10 and 64 were 3 times more likely to have a taser used against them by Essex Police than their white peers. Overall, black individuals accounted for 17.1% of all subjects where a taser was fired in Essex, which compares to 16.5% nationally and 44.9% in the MPS.

Additionally, HMICFRS found no disproportionality in our rates of vetting refusals when analysed against all protected characteristics. It is difficult to draw the same conclusion for misconduct and grievance investigations due to the low number of ethnic minority employees facing investigation, however complaints data from 2022/23 shows the following about complaints of discrimination:

- 49% of all complaints classified as 'discrimination' fell in the category of 'race', followed by 'disability' (19%).
- Of all discrimination complaints investigated and closed within the same period (regardless of category), acceptable service was deemed to have been given in 81% of cases. Unacceptable service was deemed to have been given in 4% of cases.
- Between 01/09/2022 and 28/02/2023 there were 212 complaint strands identified as being VAWG related, of which 130 related to dissatisfaction in handling a case and 82 related to police perpetrated behaviours.

Finally, whilst we were not able to complete extensive analysis on HR data for this report, we are able to see that a proportionality lower number of female officers leave the service in Essex after less than three years than their male counterparts. Although this cannot be used as a direct indicator of levels of misogyny, it is reassuring that we appear to retain female recruits at a higher rate than males.

4.2.3 Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

Our strong internal policies and strategies ensure we deliver policing fairly and proportionately in Essex. These include our stop and search, professional standards, and harassment policies, as well as our diversity and inclusion, and professionalism strategies. These are borne out routinely through operational and organisational activity and are supported by strong governance processes including our stop and search scrutiny panel, professionalism board, and diversity equality and inclusion board.

¹⁵ [police-use-of-force-apr2021-mar2022-tables.ods](#)

We also commit publicly to supporting diversity through our membership to signatory schemes including the 'Race@work', 'Disability Confident', and 'Carer Confident' initiatives. In addition, we actively promote equal access to a policing career for those facing other challenges, for instance through the Military Charter. There are gaps in our membership however, including within the LGBTQ+ sphere and this is something that we must rectify to demonstrate our commitment to equality and inclusion for all.

Listening/discussion circles are active across the organisation which allow safe environments for honest feedback and are complemented by a growing number of proactive workstreams focussing on specific challenges. Examples include the anti-misogyny board and the 'Your Voice Forum' where the command team have 'open floor' discussions on thematic or topical issues. Whilst our proactivity in tackling discrimination is clear, there are differences in approach between commands and departments which, despite the flexibility it offers, makes it difficult to coordinate our understanding as an organisation. Better coordination would generate better shared awareness and joined-up activity.

The strength of feeling about having appropriate provisions for reporting and addressing discrimination highlights the importance of our existing Professionalism and DE&I strategies and governance processes which support our ambition to be anti-racist, anti-misogynistic, and anti-sexist. Likewise, our ability to communicate this effectively through our valuing difference campaigns.

4.3 Moving forward in Essex

4.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

Ongoing external scrutiny will mean we need to be more attuned to the levels of discrimination within Essex. To enable this, we should ensure we are able to consolidate and understand feedback on discrimination more effectively, and to access and utilise relevant data routinely and effectively.

A changing workforce as well as changing social norms and values will present new forms of discrimination. To be able to understand and address these effectively, we need to be forward looking in our workforce and community engagement and to appreciate changing needs. We can achieve this through maximising interactions and better use of data from a range of sources, as well as being actively engaged in issues emerging nationally.

4.3.2 Future options

Develop our approach to gathering and consolidating staff sentiment to become more dynamic in our understanding and our response.

Review the coordination and governance of sounding boards and support networks to ensure we are joined up in the way we gather and consider issues and concerns, and how these reach senior leaders and chief officers.

Better access to and use of PSD data will transform our understanding of discrimination within the complaints, grievance, and misconduct process, allowing us to assess the proportionality and fairness of our actions and decisions, and to offer confidence to our workforce to trust the systems in place.

5 *Resourcing*

Our workforce reported similar resourcing frustrations to those felt in the Met, particularly within local and community policing teams and the impact this is having on their ability to deliver the service they aspire to. Whilst we can be reassured by the positive views of our IAGs, and by our robust governance and decision-making around resourcing and deployment, we must not lose sight of the impact of those decisions on community understanding and confidence.

Our challenge now is ensuring we retain the strong officer numbers we achieved through recent recruitment activity and that we equip and support our leaders to deal effectively despite ongoing resourcing challenges.

5.1 Findings from the MPS

Baroness Casey raised concerns over the way in which resourcing was managed, whereby Casey stated:

- Reductions in the numbers of contributions made, by civilian staff, PCSOs and Special Constables, together with the impact of other organisational changes, have contributed to additional pressures on warranted officers on the frontline, reduced efficiency in dealing with crime, and a loss of public trust and confidence.
- We saw no evidence that the Met had an evidence-based approach to its workforce planning that took account of past, existing or predicted demand.
- The de-prioritisation and de-specialisation of public protection has put women and children at greater risk than necessary.
- While the frontline is struggling and public confidence at an all-time low, the culture of the Met drives them to spin excitement and promote elite policing roles, rather than emphasising the values of consent and integrity inherent in the Peelian principles and the oath of allegiance, and the importance of frontline policing and a real connection to Londoners.

5.2 Assessment of the position in Essex Police

5.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

Several themes emerged from our engagement activity showing that concerns about resourcing cuts across several areas.

'Frontline' resilience:

Under staffing of local and community policing teams was a key concern, noting the pressure this adds on remaining officers within those teams to manage demand effectively, causing higher levels of sickness. Not only is this seen to exacerbate the resourcing challenge, but it is seen to be detrimental to the level of skills and experience within a team at any given time (affected further by the increasingly short length of service in those teams).

Like Baroness Casey found in the MPS, our focus in Essex on police officer numbers is also seen to have directly impacted the number of 'occupied' police staff posts and therefore the support those teams can give to the front line, as well as their ability to support the organisation more broadly.

There is a perception that experience is more valued in specialist commands than in local policing and community policing teams, leading to high levels of turnover in those teams compared to the longer retention of officers in specialist commands. This perceived loss of experience on the frontline and challenging resource levels are thought to be impacting our connection with the community.

Leadership and support:

Feedback highlighted the considerable pressure that our support networks are under to help employees and the organisation manage the impact of high-profile events such as Couzens, Carrick, and Casey. Those networks are delivered by employees who volunteer their time alongside their substantive roles and who feel they carry significant responsibility for ensuring staff and officers feel supported. It is vital that those who develop and deliver those networks feel supported and that senior leaders understand what this entails.

Despite the work of the media and communications team to highlight good practice and to show that we value our workforce, the importance of feeling supported and valued was reiterated strongly across all feedback groups. Particularly, there was strong feedback in places that connections between senior leaders and their teams does not foster the sense of support they are seeking. We can be reassured by the most recent Durham staff survey results which show Essex to score highly on feeling valued by the organisation but in the current socio-economic climate, it is vital that we adapt our approach if necessary.

Consistency in the level of experience within officer leadership ranks was also highlighted as a concern. Not just for mentoring newly warranted officers into effective team members, but for providing clarity of direction on force priorities and quality of service. Specific feedback highlighted concerns about the relative inexperience among sergeant ranks as a consequence of being newer in service, and therefore the lack of organisational and operational awareness to drive high standards. By comparison, there was agreement that police staff leaders are more likely to stay in their roles for longer, allowing for consistency and resilience to develop at lower ranks and for there to be a sense of stability within their teams. Whilst chief officers work hard to ensure that the movement of new officers is kept to a minimum, it is harder to apply the same principle to leadership roles where there are fewer individuals to fill critical posts. Where it is not possible to retain leaders in their roles, it is essential that we support them and their teams effectively including by providing clarity on the direction of the organisation.

Future recruitment:

Employees are concerned that, in the light of Baroness Casey's report, we will struggle to attract new recruits to Essex Police, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. Not just because of a growing mistrust in policing across the UK, but because of our proximity to London and therefore perceived proximity to the failings identified by Casey within the MPS. Whilst it was widely recognised that our 'We Value Difference' recruitment campaign has helped to reduce disparity in workforce representation¹⁶, it is also understood that we have much further to go to achieve

¹⁶ Between 2020 and 2023, the proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnic applications rose from 6% to 13%, whilst applications from females rose from 26% to 39%.

a fully representative workforce in all respects (ethnicity, gender, disability etc.), with a suggestion that we could seize this opportunity to appeal to a different pool of potential recruits.

Importantly though, and as Casey finds, policing can attract people for the wrong reasons, and this puts the responsibility on each force to do as much as they can to identify risks before individuals are able to join the service¹⁷. This is a concern that was shared by our partners, particularly in relation to the risks presented by MPS officers on transfer to Essex Police. Unsurprisingly then, the importance of personal and professional values featured strongly throughout our feedback as a key component in recruitment.

Training:

The importance of high-quality officer training was clear throughout our workforce feedback, with a concern that training delivered by non-specialists does not equip officers effectively. It was felt that by drawing on associate training officers for subject-specific development would not only help deliver high quality inputs (and therefore enhanced skills among officers in future) but would signify the value we place on their knowledge and experience.

5.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

There have been no decisions to deliberately weaken any part of Essex Police (including staff roles) and in some instances we have enhanced our resilience in areas which the MPS chose to reduce. However, we acknowledge that recruitment and resourcing decisions have had an unavoidable impact in places. For instance:

LPT officer movement: There has been no conscious decision to de-prioritise local policing roles, however it is clear from our local perceptions survey that the degree to which our communities feel understood is falling (currently 53%, down from 71% previously).

Police staff roles: Police staff roles are not seen to be any less important than officers, however the mandated focus on officer posts has led to high vacancy levels being held in most police staff areas (13% compared to 1.8% for police officer posts). This is particularly noticeable in specialist roles where we face additional challenges from industry competition (analysis, IT, and project management for instance). As the national Police Uplift Programme (PUP) winds down, we anticipate that this disparity will begin to be addressed.

Public protection capabilities: In recent years we have significantly enhanced our resilience in these areas which has included additional officers allocated to child abuse, adult abuse, offender management, mental health, and Quest teams. Additionally, a proactive order enforcement team was introduced in 2022, and our domestic abuse capabilities have grown in readiness for changes to the risk assessment process. These changes are particularly relevant in the context of Casey's 'call' for improved charge rates for crimes against women and girls- in Essex, solved rates for Domestic Abuse and Sexual offences are on a positive trajectory¹⁸, which is not the case in all forces, and is an indication that our public protection resourcing decisions have been effective.

¹⁷ In Essex, we rejected 119 police officer applicants at the vetting stage throughout 2022 because our processes identified information which was not in keeping with the values and behaviours of the force.

¹⁸ Solved rates for sexual offences and domestic abuse have been improving over each consecutive month throughout 2023 so far.

Our child protection capability is expected to be assessed as 'good' in an upcoming HMICFRS inspection. This is based on a robust self-assessment of our capabilities in 'leadership and management'; 'assessment and help'; 'ending involvement'; 'recording'; and 'police detention'.

5.2.3 Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

Essex police follow strict processes for assessing the suitability of applicants wishing to join the force, and in 2022 rejected 119 individuals at the vetting stage, meaning that those with concerning backgrounds or behaviours were denied entry into our force. Alongside continuous development of our recruitment campaigns, we are reassured that we are focussing our energy effectively on the diversity we would hope to attract to policing, with the results being a strong indication of success:

- We have doubled the ethnic diversity of the force in three years, and gender diversity has also improved, although we still have some way to go to be truly representative on both.
- We were the first UK police force to create a broad inclusion recruitment campaign in 2020 (We Value Difference) which directly helped HR and L&D colleagues to exceed the initial target for officer recruitment under the Police Uplift programme. This campaign has received national awards and has been shared with other forces, and is being expanded to enhance our focus on valuing diversity within the organisation and valuing our communities- both of which directly influence recruitment and retention.

Essex Police follow a robust succession planning process which ensures our future leaders are only considered for promotion once they can demonstrate the necessary skills, experience and personal qualities for being a strong leader. Decisions are reached through a chief officer or senior manager-led review¹⁹ of individuals put forward by their own line manager and supported by strong evidence within their PDRs. This means that those being considered for promotion should already be operating at the highest standard, which will be developed further, if successful, through ongoing support from the Essex and Kent Police Leadership Academy. It is important to note that whilst concerns about leadership suitability covered a range of ranks and grades, first line management was prominent within that, and we may wish to review how we can best use our existing processes to deliver the most effective leaders at that level.

To complement our succession planning, we make resourcing decisions based on thorough assessments of skills and capability gaps/requirements by our HR team. This evidence drives chief-officer decisions about our resourcing priorities which then supports the movement of our workforce, where necessary, to meet those needs. All decisions are rooted in firm rationale surrounding current and future risks and challenges, as well as our force priorities.

Where we have identified significant resourcing challenges, particularly linked to performance challenges, we have established a programme of major change which is being led by a chief officer and supported by senior police leaders with a view to improving staffing levels, and therefore performance, in critical areas.

¹⁹ Reviews take place at different frequencies for different levels of promotion, but at least once a year for all ranks from PC through to superintendent, and equivalent police staff roles.

5.3 Moving Forward in Essex

5.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

Future leaders will be less experienced, making it difficult to maintain standards and deliver quality investigations. We are already experiencing the effects of this in Essex and the same is being reported at a national level. We must ensure that sufficient training and support is available to help first line managers succeed.

Officer applicant pipeline shrinks, which will be felt most acutely on the front line. We have an opportunity to review our recruitment strategies to appeal to a broader section of society, and to ensure the representation of our workforce continues to improve. This could include reaching out to those who are considering a second career.

Staff applicant pipeline shrinks, and existing staff continue to seek better paid opportunities outside policing, meaning our support to the organisation is less efficient and we are unable to keep up with future requirements. We must be committed to offering an experience that appeals to those wishing to use their skills and expertise to serve the public and should include a review of pay awards when necessary or appropriate, but particularly when faced with significant industry competition.

Socio-economic uncertainty puts additional strain on the workforce causing both officers and staff to seek employment elsewhere, or for their morale and commitment to be affected. We must ensure that our welfare and support packages adapt to meet changing needs, and that they remain accessible to all.

5.3.2 Future options

Develop our approach to gathering and consolidating staff sentiment specifically around leadership, and using this to inform our thinking about recruitment, continuous professional development, and support provisions. To incorporate an element of sentiment in our performance management processes would strengthen the link between our leaders and the success of the organisation, with the benefit of it encouraging personal accountability.

Ensure we are getting the most out of our recruitment, succession planning and promotion processes, with specific attention on drawing core values from our leadership candidates.

6 Specialist Commands

There is not enough evidence to suggest that elitist and damaging cultures exist within specialist commands in Essex Police, however there is concern among our workforce that some aspects of our operating environment are conducive to those cultures embedding. Recent independent findings have reported well-run and supportive working environments in some of those teams which suggests this could be an issue of awareness and understanding between commands.

Our challenge now is to ensure our specialist commands are as representative as the wider workforce and that all commands can work effectively and supportively together, without harmful tensions developing.

6.1 Findings from the MPS

The Casey report identified some of the worst cultures, behaviours and practices were found in specialist commands. Among her published findings were:

- We have looked at two of the Met's specialist units and found serious issues of culture and behaviours that need to be addressed urgently.
- Those running BCUs do not have authority over their patch and are not responsible or accountable for the actions of specialist teams like the Violent Crime Task Force and the TSG.
- They (Specialist Commands) can be tasked to carry out policing functions in a BCU area, they are not accountable to the BCU chain of command. This can undermine a BCU's attempts to own its very extensive patch, and to be fully accountable for policing there, both to the Met and to the public...Officers described these teams as 'parachuting in'.
- We want to be crystal clear that we are not saying everyone within the organisation behaves in these ways, but that these are the prevailing and default cultures: 'the way we do things'. Worryingly, some of the worst cultures, behaviours and practices have been found in specialist firearms units, where standards and accountability should be at their absolute highest.²⁰

6.2 Assessment of the position in Essex Police

6.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

Much like the feedback we received about discriminatory behaviours, there is a sense that some of the elitist behaviours identified in specialist units in the MPS also exist within Essex Police. Without specific detail it is difficult to ascertain the scale, nature and impact of those cultures, however anecdotally, fewer PSD complaints are believed to originate from or about specialist commands. Whilst there is some suggestion of this in the data²¹, further work is required to establish whether this is a direct consequence of the specialist nature of those teams and, if so, whether it reflects a positive working environment or a culture which dissuades against reporting grievances. With

²⁰ [BARONESS CASEY REVIEW Final Report \(met.police.uk\)](https://www.met.police.uk/baroness-casey-review-final-report)

²¹ As an example, in 2022 there were 2 finalised PSD cases for OPC out of a headcount of 520, which compares to 16 finalised PSD cases out of a headcount of 536 for the West LPA.

this in mind, there were suggestions to consider an independent review of specialist teams in Essex, as well as to explore opportunities for specialist and non-specialist teams to engage more frequently and meaningfully to ease concerns.

6.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

Findings from our recent HMICFRS armed policing inspection highlighted evidence in several areas which indicates a supportive working environment, and good use of processes to help mitigate against extreme elitism manifesting:

- A positive working environment, particularly in the use of de-briefs to support collective learning.
- Strong local and regional governance mechanisms.
- Good training and exercising (including JESIP).
- Effective use of planning support including through APSTRA development and tactical advisors.
- Armed Firearms Officer (AFO) morale is high, supported by Strategic Firearms Commanders (SFCs) being easily contactable.

6.2.3 Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

Notably, it has been difficult to establish what (if any) differences exist in the formal and informal processes which support our specialist commands, compared to the larger policing teams. Anecdotally, whilst local policing teams share a view that specialist teams are less approachable, specialist teams are seen to be accommodating when an approach is made- which was borne out in HMICFRS observations during their inspection. Likewise, there is some suggestion that specialist teams feel separated from the force. In the absence of robust evidence one way or the other, we should be cautious about interpreting anecdote and might benefit from exploring the relationship between specialist teams and the wider organisation in a more structured way.

6.3 Moving forward in Essex

6.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

Cultural divide between local policing and specialist teams. If left unchecked, there is a risk that perceived elitism and other cultural inadequacies develop into deep-rooted issues that are not understood or meaningfully addressed. There are several options that could help with our understanding on this:

- Feedback mechanisms that allow insight to be captured in specific areas.
- Encouraging more frequent cross-command working, with an opportunity to debrief the benefits and challenges as well as to develop a richer understanding of colleagues across the force.
- Routine, effective use of PSD and HR data to monitor the level of representation of each command in complaints and grievance processes. Note that particularly low representation should be explored in the same way we would explore particularly high representation.

Regionalisation of specialist resources. If regionalisation of specialist resources is supported and implemented, we would need to ensure that our officers and staff operating in that space are supported in understanding and adhering to the values and behaviours expected within Essex Police and remain as part of the Essex Police family.

Inexperienced workforce. With an increasingly inexperienced workforce, it will be tempting to retain experienced officers within specialist commands so that the high level of skill required for those roles is not lost. Whilst this would mean that capability within specialist commands is protected, we would limit our future specialist resilience across the wider workforce as well as the cross-pollination of diverse personalities and cultures between different teams. As things stand, the data that would allow us to compare and track the service of officers is difficult to obtain and interpret.

6.3.2 Future proposals

Identify and facilitate opportunities for **specialist and front-line teams to work together more often**, with a view to breaking down invisible barriers and creating a culture in which neither team are suspicious of the legitimacy of the other.

Make better use of workforce data to understand and address trends and challenges in the relative lengths of service between specialist and non-specialist commands. This is with a view to encouraging representation within those teams.

7 *Accountability, Scrutiny and Governance*

There were no obvious concerns about our accountability, scrutiny, and governance mechanisms at Essex Police, with most being cited as effective routes for ensuring the organisation runs effectively. This is supported by positive feedback from scrutiny bodies that we have effective processes in place in most areas. Some concern does exist though about the effectiveness of how we coordinate and communicate those mechanisms to ensure effective business delivery.

Our challenge now is to maximise the effectiveness of governance processes to help us retain high standards and productivity at a time when we are being asked to do more.

7.1 Findings from the MPS

In her review, Baroness Casey published the following relating to accountability, scrutiny and governance:

- A dysfunctional relationship has developed between the Met and MOPAC, with defensive behaviours on one side and tactical rather than strategic approaches on the other; and the system as a whole does not

hold or deliver real consequences where failures persist. Better and more open accountability is needed to restore public trust.

- We heard that the Met had frequently invoked the concept of operational independence, at times to deter further scrutiny.
- The Met doesn't open its doors to alternative views, or to challenge. This is both short-sighted and undermines policing by consent.
- Their internal audit processes are not valued by the organisation as a process of assurance and early warning.
- The misconduct process is not fit for purpose.

7.2 Assessment of the position in Essex Police

7.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

Broadly speaking, feedback from our workforce did not identify the degree of concern about accountability, scrutiny and governance that Casey exposed in the MPS.

Staff and officers spoke positively about strategy and vision (which is supported by strong findings from our recent Durham staff survey results²²), and about our success so far in addressing D,E and I challenges. Employees also recognised strong and positive relations with our Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's office. When staff spoke about accountability, scrutiny and governance, there was a sense that stronger governance processes could be beneficial in several areas, including:

- How we learn from past police failings (specifically, the findings of the McPherson report).
- Developing better processes for sharing and learning from lived experiences and feedback in Essex.
- Being appropriately objective in our investigation of internal grievances (including those of misconduct at a senior level).
- Having clear leadership expectations and communicating them effectively.
- Introducing policy to address specific discriminatory behaviours, rather than as a subset of an overarching policy.
- Ensuring that we are monitoring ourselves end-to-end, rather than only at the beginning or at the end of an issue.
- Having structures and processes that allow better and meaningful engagement and accountability between chief officers and all other levels of the organisation, with a view to achieving high levels of trust and confidence across the workforce.

Importantly, staff were keen to share their views that we cannot be complacent in these issues- which itself requires strong accountability, scrutiny and governance.

²² Essex Police staff were found to have the highest level of vision clarity than all other forces surveyed.

7.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

Without listing the wide-ranging governance, scrutiny and accountability mechanisms embedded across the organisation, our audit and inspection findings provide rich insight and reassurance about the adequacy of those processes for addressing a number of the themes covered in the Casey review:

External audit findings:

- **Overtime** (links to resourcing) – **Substantial Assurance** including in the use of the Resource Management Unit, and specifically the governance around approving and allocating overtime.
- **Community Safety Partnerships** – (links to community understanding) - **Reasonable Assurance** including an assessment of how the force ensures compliance with statutory requirements, our assessment of the benefits delivered through the CSPs, how the CSPs are operating, and the influence of the force on delivery of Essex Police priorities.
- **Independent Advisory Groups** (links to community understanding) – **Reasonable Assurance** including on how Independent Advisory Groups are formed, their aims, objectives, and activities, and how they demonstrate value delivered against those aims and objectives.
- **Communications** (links to community engagement) - **Reasonable Assurance** including on our compliance with our own communications policies and protocols.
- **Risk Management** (links to business model and management) - **Reasonable Assurance** including an assessment of our application of newly introduced risk scoring mechanisms and whether risks are managed effectively by their risk owners in line with policy and best practice.
- **Stop and Search** (links to community understanding) - **Reasonable Assurance** including in our use of stop and search in a proportionate and legitimate manner, and the engagement that the force has with communities to provide assurance on those activities.
- **Governance – Board Structure and Internal Inspections** - **Reasonable assurance** specifically relating to adequate and well-structured governance processes and the role of the continuous improvement team in ensuring best application of process and procedure.

In addition, our most recent PEEL inspection findings highlight an ‘**effective strategic planning and performance management framework**’ alongside effective join-up between the Police and Crime Plan, force priorities and several boards and performance meetings to support delivery. They reported a robust and evidence-based performance framework with a good range of measures and key performance indicators to support service delivery.

7.2.3 Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

The positive assessment of Essex’s governance and accountability mechanisms is evident in our routine activity, which includes:

Engaging with inspection findings and recommendations. Essex Police follows robust mechanisms to ensure HMICFRS findings and recommendations are acknowledged and responded to appropriately. This includes monthly HMICFRS updates to the Chief Officer Group and quarterly reporting to the OPFCC as well as a strong dialogue between our HMICFRS FLL and force FLO. This is on top of self-assessments throughout the year that are used to assess the force’s position on key thematic areas ahead of inspections or where concerns are raised internally. In addition, from June 2023, the Force Performance Board will act as the arbitrating platform for closing tier 1 and 2 HMICFRS recommendations. Together, these mechanisms enable us to work transparently and collegially with HMICFRS to improve where necessary, whilst also being able to share best practice when appropriate.

Sufficient internal audit processes. To complement our engagement with inspection activity, Essex Police engage in equally robust audit processes, coordinated by our continuous improvement team and undertaken by independent external audit bodies. A schedule of audits is agreed for each financial year which reflects the areas of business that are either in need of a refreshed audit or where we have chosen to focus based on internal concerns. The findings of the audit activity inform the Joint Audit Committee (which comprises of a chair and four members appointed jointly by the PFCC and the Chief Constable, but who are independent of the PFCC, and Chief Constable). The committee considers findings of internal audit reports (or their summaries), the assurance provided, and the adequacy of the response by the Chief Constable. The force provides an update on the progress against outstanding management actions from internal audits to each quarterly meeting.

Risk management. Any risk which is identified either through external inspections and audits or through our own monitoring activity is assigned a senior responsible owner and tracked through our Risk STAR chamber to ensure that appropriate and effective action is being taken and that the risk owner and business area are held to account. The risk STAR chamber convenes every quarter, and progress is monitored through the six-monthly Joint Audit Committee.

Effective working relationship with the OPFCC. Essex police enjoy an incredibly supportive and open relationship with the OPFCC, who are informed of any issues and risks as soon as practicable and who have a seat at the table of a number of key meetings. This allows us to be joined up on our approach to challenges, including those from central government.

7.3 Moving forward in Essex

7.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

Arguably the most significant challenge facing all police forces is the degree to which scrutiny is increasing from central government. Driven largely by new strategies and initiatives, which require evidence of implementation and effectiveness, there is a risk that forces' abilities to satisfy those requirements stifles the effectiveness of their own internal scrutiny and governance processes. More acutely, there is a risk that increasing centralised scrutiny will begin to challenge the operational independence of Chief Constables.

7.3.2 Future options

Develop our business mapping capability to build a clear understanding of how internal and external governance and accountability operates around priority business. This will be beneficial for accommodating an increasing number of new requirements, or for identify gaps in our existing processes. A piece of work to develop a business mapping capability is being scoped within the Continuous Improvement and Analytics directorate.

The importance of a **clear leadership strategy** was highlighted within our workforce feedback as a key driver of effective governance and accountability. By ensuring every employee knows how their role contributes to the overall operations of Essex Police, and how they contribute to effective accountability and governance will be key to a refreshed leadership strategy in due course.

8 Misconduct and Grievances

Workforce sentiment is split, with strong feeling in places that the misconduct and grievance process is ineffective, including the role of managers in identifying and addressing concerns. Others have shared positive experiences of being listened to and having their concerns addressed, which is supported by independent findings that our culture and processes are conducive to effective misconduct and grievance management. However, we are lacking the evidence to determine this one way or the other.

Our challenge now is to improve the confidence of our workforce to report into and trust that the processes which deal with grievances and misconduct will resolve them effectively and in a timely manner.

8.1 Findings from the MPS

Baroness Casey concluded that the misconduct and grievance processes within the MPS are flawed, among the published findings:

- The prevailing culture in the Met does not encourage reporting of wrong-doing, rather those who experience it fear the consequences of being ostracised, moved or removed for speaking out.
- The Met's internal misconduct process takes too long, is worse with regard to sexual misconduct, fails to spot patterns of poor behaviour, results in allegations being more likely to be dismissed than acted on, places a heavy burden on those raising concerns and has racial disparity across the system... with white officers dealt with less harshly than Black or Asian officers.
- Black and Asian officers and staff are far more likely than their White colleagues to raise a grievance. In particular, Black officers and staff are twice as likely as their White colleagues to raise a grievance.

8.2 Assessment of the position in Essex Police

8.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

The issue of grievances and misconduct attracted some of the strongest sentiments from the workforce in Essex Police, particularly the way PSD conduct internal investigations. Importantly, those who expressed their concerns also highlighted that the subsequent lack of trust and confidence that some of the workforce feel is similar to the sentiments of the workforce in the MPS.

For some employees, there is a reluctance to report concerning behaviour to PSD for fear of the wrong action being taken (for instance, the subject being moved as opposed to the behaviour being addressed) which has led to concerns over the proportionality and consistency of PSD investigations and mistrust caused by a perceived lack of rationale or transparency around PSD outcomes.

As well as the impact of an internal investigation on an employee's wellbeing, the feedback from our workforce highlighted the importance of treating victims of internal misconduct in the same way we aspire to treat all other victims- ensuring there is parity in our code of practice for all victims.

Finally, the importance of the first line manager role in dealing with misconduct was acknowledged by our workforce, and reinforces the support we need to provide to staff and officers in those leadership positions, particularly those that are relatively new in service themselves. Equipping first-line managers with the skills and understanding to identify and respond to misconduct, whether they see it themselves or it is reported to them by others, is crucial for repairing the confidence of the wider workforce in this area.

8.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

Positive 'speaking out' culture:

From the strength of feedback, it is clear there are concerns we need to understand in more depth, and which indicate that we are not immune to Casey's findings- specifically, we need to ensure we hear and acknowledge the discrimination experienced by some of our employees²³. And whilst it is reassuring that our workforce feel that they are in an environment where they can safely raise concerns to their line management and feel supported by the organisation²⁴, this is lower for reporting to PSD²⁵.

Reassuringly, our long-standing relationship with Durham university has allowed us to track these sentiments over several years, with our most recent staff survey indicating that the underlying culture within Essex Police is one which encourages staff to speak out, as well as one which is seen to address concerns when they are raised. The results show that our workforce identified strong ethical leadership from line managers across the force and the positive impact this has on team inclusivity, internal motivation to treat others with respect, higher levels of engagement and lower frequencies of experiencing hindrance stressors. This indicates that when our staff speak out, line managers work to resolve any issues identified.

Adequate processes:

Essex police received positive feedback from an HMICFRS-led inspection into vetting and counter corruption functions, with key findings which include:

- Staff and officers feel they are supported effectively after reporting sexual misconduct.
- Processes are in place which encourage and demonstrate proactive identification of concerning behaviour, which is then communicated effectively between key commands (vetting, HR, counter corruption) for monitoring or to address.
- The counter corruption unit were seen to routinely develop their intelligence on concerning individuals beyond the initial allegation to ensure we satisfy investigative thresholds.
- The decisions of the vetting manager in all cases reviewed during the inspection were supported by HMICFRS inspectors, indicating a consistent and fair decision-making process.

Representation of black employees in the misconduct process:

Whilst the findings from the vetting and CCU HMICFRS inspection did not highlight any discrimination within the misconduct process, it is difficult to establish this within the data itself because of the relatively low numbers of

²³ Our internal VAWG survey found that 16% of female respondents reported being a victim of attitudes and behaviours of a VAWG nature between 2020 and 2022.

²⁴ 89% of respondents to the VAWG survey reported feeling comfortable raising concerns of a VAWG nature to their line management, whilst 84% reported that they would feel supported by the organisation if they were to do so.

²⁵ By comparison, 63% felt they would be comfortable reporting behaviours and attitudes of a VAWG nature to PSD.

ethnic minority employees within the misconduct process at one time²⁶. However, data available from the Home Office would indicate that Essex does not have higher rates of black officers under misconduct investigation than nationally²⁷. Data for the MPS was not available for the same comparison, but the analysis used by Casey for her report shows that in the MPS, black officers were almost twice as likely to be the subject of a misconduct allegation than their white peers²⁸.

In addition, and although not a misconduct matter, HMICFRS findings also highlight the steps taken by Essex Police to ensure that individuals from an ethnic minority background are supported throughout the vetting process. This reflects our low tolerance for discrimination within that process specifically as well as our awareness of the potential for it to occur.

8.2.3 existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

Strategy: In May 2022, Essex Police launched its new 2022–2025 Professionalism Strategy, which is supported by a Professionalism Delivery Plan and a clear set of Supervisory Standards. The strategy is complemented by existing policy relating to discipline, standards, and whistleblowing as well as the introduction of an anonymous email reporting line into PSD. Essex Police have also invested in a Professionalism Engagement Team to educate the workforce further and to build confidence in identifying and challenging inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively.

Governance: The ethics committee introduced in 2017 is still active and is strengthened by the participation of our PSD in a Regional Ethics Board as well as our internal ‘Learning the Lessons’ board which brings together the College of Policing, force legal representatives, HR, continuous improvement teams and PSD to consider common themes featuring in complaints and misconduct matters. Additionally, the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable meets quarterly to understand relevant issues arising within Essex Police; to ensure that the force takes a balanced and proportionate response to them, and that we operate within an ethical framework that promotes, reinforces, and supports the highest standards expected of staff. A representative of the PFCC attends these meetings.

Process: Essex Police follow robust processes for identifying and dealing with internal and external complaints, as well as monitoring the levels and trends of those we are receiving.

External complaints can be received through a number of routes, including through the force control room and the quality of service team, and are audited regularly by the OPFCC. Any complaint which is classified as discrimination is automatically referred to PSD.

To complement this, Essex Police enjoy strong relationships with community groups which provide an objective perspective on our professionalism and standards, ensuring we learn from concerning behaviours and can adapt to changing expectations. In addition to regular formalised meetings between senior leaders and local independent

²⁶ Of the finalised PSD cases for 2022, 9 out of 149 investigations involved an ethnic minority officers. There were 2 black officers under a PSD investigation out of 13 black officers in workforce, 2 Asian officers out of 41 in the workforce and 5 mixed race officers out of 81 in the workforce compared to 135 white officers out of 3415 in workforce.

²⁷ 90% of officers under misconduct investigation in Essex are white, compared to 69% nationally. In both cases, approximately 1% are black. [Home Office Misconduct Data Tables.ods](#)

²⁸ [Analytical Report - evidence to support Baroness Casey of Blackstock's conclusions about the current misconduct system in the Metropolitan Police Service](#)

Advisory Groups (IAGs) representatives from those groups are invited to scrutinise our activities in key areas such as PSD and strip search, with a view to inviting the same independent scrutiny over custody.

Internal complaints (grievances) can also be received through a number of routes including reporting directly to management or anonymous reporting to PSD.

These formal routes for internal reporting are complemented by listening circles which have been implemented by PSD, in collaboration with support networks, to provide a safe environment in which employees can discuss concerns before being communicated through the appropriate channels. Specifically, there have been recent listening circles to hear directly about the concerns over PSD and their management of complaints and misconduct.

8.3 Moving forward in Essex

8.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

Inexperienced workforce:

With approximately 40% of the workforce with less than five years' service, it is possible that this will mean behaviours and actions that fall short of the expected standards occur more frequently which means it is vitally important that our leaders are prepared for supporting their young-in-service officers. Making better use of our own data to understand the causes of poor conduct will help with this and with identifying prevention opportunities.

Changing social norms:

Acceptable behaviours, and levels of tolerance within society will continue to change as the global speaking out culture continues to gather pace, and social movements continue to represent those causes. As a public service that is increasingly susceptible to legitimacy challenges, it is important that we continue to take steps to identify and engage in emerging social issues, using our existing strong connections with community groups and making best use of the cultural awareness that exists in our workforce.

8.3.2 Future options

Effective use of data is vital if we are to understand our complaints, grievance, and misconduct issues and to be confident that our processes are effective. This is already being explored to some extent between PSD and the Performance Analysis Unit (PAU) which, once developed, will allow us to improve our transparency with our own workforce as well as our communities, where appropriate.

Transparency around PSD processes and outcomes (where appropriate) will begin to generate better trust and confidence within our workforce meaning we might expect to see higher levels of reporting of concerns.

9 *Community Understanding and Connection*

Linked closely to resilience challenges in local and community policing teams, our workforce reported similar concerns to those raised in the Met about the erosion of community understanding and therefore how much our communities trust us. Whilst we can be reassured by the positive views of our IAGs, those concerns seem to be borne out in data which shows community understanding falling away.

Our challenge now is to mitigate the impact of resilience challenges on the connection felt between our local and community policing teams and their public. We can achieve this by continuing to innovate in the way we engage and communicate with our communities.

9.1 Findings from the MPS

Baroness Casey explored the MPS community understanding and connection; among her published findings:

- When discussing austerity Baroness Casey states: Other steps taken to deliver efficiencies have weakened the management and delivery of frontline policing in the capital and its connection to Londoners.
- While the Met has aspirations to engage with London's communities, it does not do enough to make its workforce look like and represent the make-up of the community it polices, undermining both trust and confidence, and effectiveness.
- The level of central direction in local policing, and a patchwork and centrally-directed approach to addressing resourcing gaps, impacts on a BCU Commander's ability to truly 'own' their local area, and to set their own direction and tone with their community.
- The Met's approach to engagement tends to focus on the need for the public to understand the Met and the difficult job it faces.
- The function and purpose of community engagement had been 'deprioritised' and members of the public who wanted to work with the police had been side lined and not valued.

9.2 Assessment of the position in Essex Police

9.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

Reduced resilience in local and community policing teams is a significant concern among our workforce, with a fear that this is driving a disconnect with our communities and compounded by the sense that experienced staff are retained within specialist teams. Whilst it provides comfort to hear that our officers are committed to serving their communities through strong relationships and consent, the level of concern reflects the extent to which they feel those conditions are being jeopardised. Our workforce clearly understands that the levels of disconnect in the MPS are driven by their larger resilience challenges, but the magnitude of the impact which was highlighted in our staff feedback should be acknowledged.

In contrast, the feedback from IAGs has been positive, with representatives across the county reporting that they don't see the same challenges with community understanding manifesting in Essex. Overall, they reported feeling well connected and well informed about local policing and that Essex Police understood the different needs of their

communities. Whilst this is incredibly positive, we should keep in mind that this feedback is a condensed view presented by well-respected and trusted representatives, and that other views will exist outside of those formal dialogues. It was clear that police attendance at IAGs varied across the county which is something we must address.

Transparency and communication also featured strongly in feedback from both our workforce and our community representatives, with both groups acknowledging that there is always more we can do. Our use of data was of particular interest in that context, as was the work of police staff- and how we can combine the two to promote the work of the police more effectively by exposing police staff to the public.

What is reassuring, is the depth of thought this issue has been given by our workforce in an effort to prevent us reaching the same position in the MPS as identified by the Casey review. As an example, there is a keenness to bring community representatives into DE&I training so that staff and officers can hear about and learn from their lived experiences. Likewise, to extend existing initiatives whereby officers undertake immersive development by engaging meaningfully with communities that they are less familiar with.

Finally, the workforce recognises our existing potential to promote our good work so that we continue to capture the support and trust of our public without the need for them to defend their local police.

9.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

Our independent public perception survey provides a rich source of representative feedback from across our communities, whether they have been in contact with the police or not. And whilst we can see some promising trends, we are conscious of the need to understand the areas where we are performing less well, and to take steps to improve.

Key trends that we have recently drawn from this data include:

- A larger proportion of Essex residents believe that the police are doing a good or excellent job than before the pandemic²⁹, however the proportion who feel that the police have a good community understanding is reducing³⁰.
- Confidence among ethnic minority groups and females is increasing in Essex and, in some cases, is higher than white or male groups.
- The confidence of victims in Essex has not dropped in the same way that it has for non-victims, although there is still a disparity between the two, with victim confidence being lower overall.

9.2.3 Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

Engagement Strategy. The force has an existing engagement strategy written by the head of continuous improvement and the public contact manager; however this is several years old now and may benefit from review alongside the communications and media strategy which was referenced in section 5 (resourcing). Particularly with a renewed understanding of our community demographics³¹, we need to ensure our strategies are well-targeted and effective.

²⁹ 75% up to the end of December 2022, compared to 65% up to the end of December 2019.

³⁰ 53% up to the end of December 2022, compared to 60% up to the end of December 2019.

³¹ Detailed Census data has now been released, allowing us to understand how our demographic composition has changed.

Community engagement activity. At every level, officers are encouraged to engage proactively with their communities in formal and informal settings and by representing the force at local and county-wide events. Alongside the vital role that our Community Safety and Engagement Officer (CSEOs) perform, this not only ensures our public are able to see and speak to their local police, but it serves as a rich source of insight for ensuring we are delivering the service they need and expect. Logging this activity is key to understanding how effectively we are engaging, and a process for this has recently been reintroduced with a view to informing and improving future activity. These logs are in the early stages of development and may benefit from technical or innovative oversight to maximise and future proof our capabilities.

Trust and confidence portfolio. The DCC-led trust and confidence portfolio provides the necessary governance structure for ensuring we understand and respond to existing and emerging confidence issues. Meeting on a six-monthly basis, the Public Confidence Board is a platform for discussing a range of data and insight including our independent public perception data, campaign material, quality of service findings, and public engagement activity reports. The meeting is attended by external partners as well as OPFCC representatives, with certain aspects also scrutinized separately through OPFCC scrutiny boards.

9.3 Moving forward in Essex

9.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

Ongoing legitimacy challenges from MPS and others:

The legitimacy challenge in policing will not be easily resolved and is amplified by similar challenges across the public sector as well as ever-changing social norms. As a result, it may feel like we are under more pressure, more often from our communities, partners, and other stakeholders, to do better or to explain our wrongdoings. It is important that there is a culture within Essex police to be resilient to those challenges but not unnecessarily defensive. This can be achieved through positive engagement and transparency which allows our local communities to see that there are clear differences between the narrative driven by the failings identified by Casey in the MPS, and the nature of policing in Essex.

Remembering the basics:

Baroness Casey made reference to the Peelian principles throughout her report, highlighting the importance of retaining close community connections. These connections are at the heart of policing in Essex; however it is easy to be distracted by initiatives that unknowingly draw us away from 'the basics'. We should ensure that wherever we innovate or make changes to our operations, we continue to consider what the impact will be (if any) on the principles of community-led policing.

Partnership resilience:

One of the biggest challenges in policing is the resilience of our partners in managing demand which is shared across the system. Increasingly, as all public sector organisations are becoming more stretched, the demand is shifting and presenting new challenges for policing as the 'last port of call,' which in turn means that system failings are seen to be failings in policing. As the frequency of these failings increase, policing risks being seen as the organisation repeatedly at the centre of tragedy or professional wrongdoing. Collaborating effectively with partners to fully

understand shared demand and to be able to meet it dynamically together will help explain how the system as a whole, but policing specifically, is fair.

Funding:

Baroness Casey identified at the centre of the MPS failings with their communities was an absence of 'front-line' engagement, be that as a result of limited resourcing or because of ineffective strategies and activity. Essex police are not immune to those challenges and to making difficult decisions about officer re-deployment, which are brought about by the extreme funding constraints we continue to face. However, as one of the lowest funded forces per head of population, it is a considerable achievement that three quarters of our community think we do a good or excellent job, and is an indication that we manage to retain a good reputation despite those challenges. We must continue to ensure that community impact is at the heart of our operational decision making.

9.3.2 Future options

Continue to innovate. Consider new engagement opportunities which would enhance public understanding of policing as a whole by exposing aspects of policing that are otherwise hidden but which are key to delivering an excellent service. Feedback from engagement with external stakeholders identified a gap in their understanding of police staff roles which might be preventing them appreciating the culture and dynamics of the organisation and therefore the significant effort from all employees to ensure the public are protected. Knowing that front line officers are only part of the equation, could help with developing a narrative about the commitment and dedication of those individuals which would add important context to the media focus on the front-line.

Maximise community insight. It is essential that we use available insight as effectively as possible to better understand our communities needs and their feelings towards policing. With the 2021 Census data having been recently released, and a rich source of insight from our own public perceptions data, there is an opportunity to do so, and to expand this even further to other available datasets including the Crime Survey for England and Wales and MOSAIC.

10 Business Model and Management

Like our accountability, scrutiny and governance processes, there were no obvious concerns about our overall business model and management, with evidence of effective demand management and organisational decision-making. However, we must ensure we can plan effectively for the future, identifying emerging challenges in good time to adapt our processes.

Our challenge now is to retain this good position but to capture future challenges effectively within our planning processes so that we can adapt effectively and swiftly to changing needs.

10.1 Findings from the MPS

In addition to the failings specifically around misconduct, vetting, governance and scrutiny processes, Baroness Casey also reported failings in the overall running and management of the MPS. Specifically, Casey reports:

- The problem, however, is not its size but its inadequate management. The Met is run as a set of disconnected and competing moving parts, lacking clear systems, goals or strategies. It runs on a series of uncoordinated and short-lived initiatives, long on activity but short on action. There is no workforce plan, no strategic assessment of the needs and skills of the organisation, and demand modelling is outdated.
- The organisation has a 'we know best' attitude. It dismisses external views and criticisms, and adopts the attitude that no one outside the Met can understand the special nature and unique demands of their work.
- The management of people is poor. The Met's processes do not effectively root out bad officers, help to tackle mediocre officers, or truly support and develop good officers ... and its own policies, practices and culture serve to exacerbate the problem.
- The Police Uplift Programme has been a missed opportunity to improve the diversity and skills base of its workforce ... If recruitment continues its current trajectory, it will take at least another thirty years, until 2053, to reach gender balance. It will take even longer, until 2061, to reach 46% Black, Asian and ethnic minority representation – what is needed to be representative of London today, let alone the even more diverse city it will be in nearly 40 years' time.

10.2 Assessment of the position in Essex Police

10.2.1 Workforce, public and partner feedback

It is reassuring that despite the examples of good business management that we have drawn on in this report, our workforce in Essex is alive to the need to continuously improve, and to be able to do this through self-reflection. They are under no illusion that we operate in a perfect environment, which is in stark contrast to defensiveness and denial position Casey identified in the MPS, and means we are more likely to recognise and respond effectively when things go wrong. It was clear that there are aspects of our business model in Essex which our workforce feel could be sharpened, and include:

- Ensuring we have the right **educational programmes** and platforms for embedding acceptable behaviours and improving them where necessary.
- Ensure we are **maximising our strategic planning and governance mechanisms** to be effective in shaping our future workforce and demand management capabilities, and that unintended consequences of structural changes are avoided.
- **Resist moving hastily between priorities** to avoid draining resources in key areas.
- Being active in **demonstrating how we have identified and embedded learnings** either from our own challenges and downfalls or from those experienced by others.
- **Ensure key messages are consistent and backed up by action** at all levels of leadership so that staff know what is expected and what they can expect in return. This includes embracing the 'be the change' ethos, actively promoting psychological safety (particularly with lower-level concerns) and recognising (through actions and words) when the workforce feels challenged or deflated. This genuine, proactive approach to organisational challenge is likely to drive our workforce to have trust and confidence in their leaders.
- **Review and adapt our local policy to reflect the changing demands of policing**, particularly where the impact of new policy is still being understood. Working from home is a frequently cited example, where policy changes have been made to improve working conditions but might also be hindering our ability to identify and respond to behaviours and practices that jeopardise our good work.
- **Review and refresh our approach to understanding workforce sentiment and wellbeing**. A more dynamic approach producing richer insight would not only mean we can understand the impact of workforce challenges in a timelier manner but that employees are more likely to engage in findings and activity generated by that understanding.

10.2.2 What the evidence says about Essex Police

Essex police are fortunate to have access to recent independent findings which highlight good practice in many areas, however these should not be used as the only source of self-reflection and should be balanced against the unstructured insight we can access from our workforce and our stakeholders. Specifically, we can be reassured by the findings below:

Business processes in critical areas:

The findings from our recent HMICFRS inspection into vetting and counter corruption show that we have strong working practices for highlighting and managing risk as well as for managing demand effectively in our vetting services. In addition to the positive findings already discussed in this paper, the following also applies:

- Good awareness of employees requiring a vetting refresh or enhancement, with suitable restrictions implemented, if necessary, until checks have been completed.
- Good understanding of future vetting demand, and timely adjustment of staffing levels to meet that demand.
- Effective use of existing business process (e.g. PDR) to identify integrity risks at an early stage.
- Consistency of decision-making by templatising process so that vetting staff follow the same logic and rationale for all vetting decisions.

Awareness of staff sentiment about the organisation:

Findings from the Durham Staff Survey indicate that Essex Police employees generally feel positively about the management and running of the organisation. As examples:

- Overall, the workforce in Essex police is more positive than national comparisons.
- There appear to be significantly lower levels of hindrance stressors in Essex Police than nationally. This is believed to be influenced by initiatives such as the Chief Constable's 6000 conversations tour where stressors could be identified and, wherever possible, resolved. Essex police are the standout force for this measure.
- Strong indication of positive team environments across the force.
- Strong indication of force autonomy, particularly around speaking out.
- The highest rate of job satisfaction across all forces surveyed.
- A sense that Essex police employ the 'right people'.

Representative workforce

The representativeness of Essex police has improved in recent years, both for ethnic minority and gender representation, however there is still further to go in both areas.

- The 4.12% of our workforce who are of an ethnic minority background compares to 11.2% of the wider population of Essex, and to the previous figure of 3.53% in 2019.
- The 48% of our workforce who are female compares to 51.3% of the wider population.

Well designed, and well targeted recruitment activity from the media and communications team has been key to this success, and recently won an IESE award for its innovative and creative approach. The supportive working environment we offer to our workforce is also a significant factor here.

Effective understanding of demand:

Essex Police have robust processes for monitoring demand and performance which enables effective decision making on tactical and strategic matters. From our most recent HMICFRS PEEL inspection, we can be reassured by the following findings:

- The force understands demand facing neighbourhood policing teams and manages resources in line with that demand.
- In addition, the force understands the crime demand it faces more generally and what resources it needs to meet it effectively.
- The force is meeting the challenges of high and fluctuating demand and an inexperienced workforce within its local policing teams.
- The force's financial plans, including its investment programme, are affordable and will support it to continue to meet future demands.
- Essex Police actively seeks opportunities to improve services by working effectively with other forces.

However, with complexity and demand increasing, we need to adapt to new ways of understanding and managing our performance in key areas, which was also identified by HMICFRS:

- The force needs to improve the time it takes to respond to non-emergency public calls for service and reduce the abandonment rate and wait times.
- The force needs to do more to ensure that routine calls for service are properly assessed and prioritised and any delays in response are kept to acceptable levels.

- Ensure there is capacity and capability to undertake nationally recognised risk assessments (MOSOVO) in a timely manner and ensure that the quality and timeliness of supervisory reviews are of a standard that enables it to effectively manage risk.
- Strategically, the force needs to ensure that it understands capability and capacity in more detail to improve resource deployment and effective management of demand.

10.2.3 Existing organisational mechanisms and assurances

As demonstrated already in this report, Essex Police have strong organisational management processes which are well-established across all areas of business and at all levels. This means that each policing challenge is understood separately as well as in the context of our overall mission, and that effective decisions can be made at a tactical and strategic level. Sitting above those strong mechanisms is a force plan which is clear, consistent, and well understood by employees³².

Particular assurances around our business model and management activity, are:

Operational effectiveness is driven by well-established Tactical Tasking and Coordination Groups; Gold groups for thematic challenges; partnership working structures for shared demand; and well-structured strategic collaboration with the fire and rescue service, health service and ambulance service.

Demand and performance are closely monitored through a rigorous reporting and accountability schedule which includes local performance meetings (monthly), chief officer performance oversight (monthly), PFCC performance accountability meetings (monthly), force-wide self-assessment of strategic priorities (quarterly), force-wide performance and leadership forums (quarterly), six-monthly strategic demand meetings, and the annual production of the Force Management Statement. Together, this means that Essex Police has a continuous finger on the pulse and will be further enhanced with the ongoing roll out of data visualisation solutions which will provide richer, more dynamic insight into our demand challenges.

Resourcing is managed through similarly robust activity which includes:

- Resourcing priorities are reviewed and agreed quarterly by the chief officer team based on an assessment of operational and organisational priorities and emerging challenges.
- A monthly resourcing deployment meeting, chaired by the director of HR and attended by chief officers, determines officer deployment in line with an assessment of priorities and supporting.
- The Efficiency, Savings and Growth board (chaired by the DCC) provides oversight and governance of bids to increase resourcing and, if agreed, ensures these are delivered in a timely manner.
- Risks around capability and capacity are monitored through the risk STAR chamber, with mitigating actions in place to reduce the impact.
- Additional mechanisms have also been in place throughout the Police Uplift Programme to monitor uptake against targets and to manage our activity accordingly. As a result, we have comfortably exceeded our original intake target with a strategy allowing us to always remain close to our new officer establishment.
- Essex Police have also developed comprehensive retention provisions including a 'Thinking of Leaving' support function which is promoted through HR and complemented by the work of retention ambassadors.

³² In the most recent Durham staff survey, vision clarity scored moderately high for both officers and staff and was high against the national average. While still higher than that seen in 2017 for both role groups, vision clarity has declined slightly on average since the 2019 pulse survey.

The initiative encourages potential leavers to consider their options and motivations and to discuss openly with their line managers which, in turn, allows us to better understand employees' reasons for leaving and to consider preventative actions we could take in future.

Employee support is crucial for maintaining a well-run organisation and is at the heart of how Essex Police operate. Among many other initiatives, this includes:

- A Diversity, Equality and Inclusiveness strategy which drives the organisation towards being increasingly diverse, fair, and inclusive for our workforce as well as our service users.
- Employee networks provide support and guidance over a vast range of issues affecting a growing number of employees. These include support for those with caring responsibilities, disability, flexible working, addiction, bereavement, fertility and adoption, maternity and paternity, single parent families, and work life balance.
- Targeted Continuous Professional Development opportunities for under-represented employee groups.
- A chief officer-led staff parity portfolio, focussing on how we attract, retain, develop, and recognise police staff who play a vital role alongside their officer colleagues.
- Evolving policy which ensures officers are able to take rest days owed to them in a timely manner.

Financial planning follows a well-established schedule with reports feeding into key governance boards throughout the year. Monthly finance, MTFS, treasury management, and budget setting updates all feature at monthly Chief Officer Group meetings as well as at other strategic boards (for example at Joint Audit Committee) and OPFCC-led meetings (strategic board and PRSB for instance).

Risk management is crucial for ensuring all other business cycles can deliver the required outcomes and is achieved through extensive activity across the organisations. This includes:

Operational risks and management risks are both reviewed monthly by Ch/Supt, Head of Department, or chief officer owners, and supported by the risk and planning officers who produce regular reports and verbally assess each risk with its owner. These then feature on monthly SLTs and through the Force Risk register.

Strategic Risks are reviewed monthly or quarterly, again with support from the risk and planning officers. The quarterly cycle also supports the DCC-led risk STAR chamber where strategic risks are assessed for changes in score and effectiveness of mitigating actions, which then informs reporting to the chief officer group and joint audit committee.

Scheduled monthly and quarterly activity is complemented by a focus on risk throughout the year in other areas such as FMS production, representation at the NPCC risk management forum, risk practitioner groups, risk training, and ongoing tailored support to individual risk owners.

Overall, the effectiveness of the planning and monitoring cycles at Essex Police meant we were able to deliver all programmes of change that had been scheduled for 2022/23 and to close the financial year comfortably within our financial tolerance.

10.3 Moving forward in Essex

10.3.1 Future risks, challenges, and opportunities

The **complexity of policing, coupled with funding challenges**, means our processes and business models will need to adapt to remain effective at addressing our priorities. It is vital that we work collegiately on this to ensure we are adapting together and not developing new practices that have unintended consequences on demand management across commands. These challenges are amplified even further by industrial activity in partner organisations which puts further pressure on policing as the ‘last resort’ service.

A growing appetite for **governance, accountability, and strategy-setting from central government** is already having an impact on local forces, often leading to complexity and duplicity in our efforts to address national priorities as well as our own. Going forward we would benefit from developing a business mapping capability which allows us to see points of similarity and points of difference in national and local requirements and where these are well-managed in force or where we have gaps in our existing approach. This would enable us to respond confidently to new demands whilst avoiding duplication of effort or conflicting activity.

Attractiveness of public sector employment. The effectiveness of our business model depends entirely on the strength and resilience of our workforce. Notwithstanding the success of our recent recruitment activity, there is a strong chance that our pool of potential applicants shrinks over the coming years as the impact of the cost-of-living crisis deepens and job seekers of all ages, and with different levels of experience, find better security in other sectors. To counteract this, we need to ensure that our recruitment and retention activity can respond dynamically to capture the attention of *all* potential employees rather than targeted cohorts. As an example, and frequently cited in employee feedback, was the breadth of experience and knowledge that we could bring into the police from individuals who are considering a second career both as staff and officers.

10.3.2 Future options

Partnership strategic demand monitoring. To support our ongoing partnership collaborations, particularly in the innovative and transformational space, we should consider how we can improve our understanding of shared demand on a more routine basis. As well as understanding demand in topical areas such as mental health and VAWG, it would be beneficial to capture changes and future challenges in demand more broadly, which would further enhance our future planning capabilities, both as single agencies and as a collective. A cross-system strategic demand group is an option here.

Business mapping. As per section 7 (governance, accountability and scrutiny) an early scoping exercise to map activity across the organisation is underway in the Continuous Improvement and Analytics directorate, which should be expanded to show how we are capturing key workstreams (local and national) in our processes and to identify where duplication can be avoided or where we are failing to address a requirement adequately.

11 Reflections

Essex police do not face the same gravity of challenge identified by Casey, but we still have work to do.

The impact of Baroness Casey's report will be lasting and has certainly remained a focal point within Essex Police in the short term, with our workforce feeling strongly that policing remains a profession to be proud of and that we should do what is needed to make changes and improvements.

The willingness of our employees to engage in discussion about Casey's findings has been key to developing our initial assessments, however this is by no means a complete process. Going forward we will want to explore each area in more detail and, although we may choose to focus our attentions on specific issues, there are some key recurring themes that feature as potential future ambitions, and which cut across all aspects:

1. Use of data and information.

Throughout our assessment, we highlighted the importance of improving our use of data and information to fully understand our current and future challenges and make informed decisions.

2. Maximising employee feedback.

A more dynamic approach to gathering staff feedback (including greater frequency) would directly complement our use of other data and information to understand how effectively we are delivering policing, as well as giving us the tools to be more routinely in tune with the experiences and feelings of our employees.

3. Supporting our leaders.

Across all themes, leadership has been a key factor in how we assess ourselves, but particularly the critical role of our first line managers. We need to understand what improvement, if any, we could make to the support we give those leaders to be highly effective.

4. Learning lessons.

There was a strong sense that there is a time-limited opportunity to be seen to learn from Casey's findings, and to use this opportunity to enhance our 'brand' as Essex police as well as to help re-build the policing brand across England and Wales. Being clear on how we will embed learnings and demonstrate improvements will be key, and includes how we choose to frame and articulate the issues raised by Casey going forward.

5. Understanding our business.

Whilst we already do well in this area, we need to maintain a tight understanding of how demand, governance, and business process interact across the organisation which will support us in effective and adaptable decision making and drawing out efficiencies across the organisation.

It is clear that there *is* work to do, however we should be reassured by the reflections of independent professionals who have assessed us to be an employer who is seen by the workforce to be supportive, ethical, and clear in our direction. In particular, Professor Les Graham of Durham University, who is in agreement with this:

Essex Police and the Durham University Policing Research Unit (PRU)³³ have collaborated over the past seven years to conduct research into the attitudes, motivation and wellbeing of the policing workforce and aspects of the workforce culture. Three force-wide surveys have been completed and Essex Police have also participated in four national surveys.

Professor Graham³⁴ has commented that the results of the collaborative research support the view that Essex Police is a relatively positive force and has demonstrated ability to achieve improvement for the workforce.

In terms of culture, the latest staff survey highlighted that the workforce within Essex Police feel on average high levels of inclusivity in their work teams with a culture of valuing individuals and respecting difference. The force's communications around acceptable standards of behaviour and the need to overcome prejudice are seen as clear. Moreover, the workforce reports experiencing a high average level of ethical leadership behaviour from their immediate supervisor, average levels of antagonism to diversity are low and internal motivation to overcome prejudice is reported as high.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that individuals in Essex Police are highly motivated to serve the public, achieve a positive impact on the communities they serve and keep people from harm. Members of the workforce also report a high sense of satisfaction in their jobs and being prepared to invest their energy into their work, and are prepared to make improvements in how they serve the public.

Professor Graham has been impressed by the forces' approach and efforts to reduce hindrance stressors and barriers to individuals doing their work, and the recent work to improve clarity of the force vision. For both of these measures, Essex Police now compares very favourably in comparison to other police forces.

Professor Graham reports that he has found Essex Police to be prepared to measure difficult topics, interested, and focused on the results and findings, and proactive in their implementation of policy changes and interventions to achieve improvements for the workforce. Professor Graham highlights that Essex Police were the first force to collaborate with the PRU to measure the frequency that members of the workforce experience sexism and inappropriate behaviour and to examine the importance of individuals' motivation to overcome prejudice and bias. This innovative work assisted in the development and successful completion of a national research project in policing into diversity, equality and inclusion.

³³ The Policing Research Unit (PRU) at Durham University (over the past ten years) has conducted local research with 39 police forces across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. It has also conducted three national surveys within policing in England and Wales on the topic of wellbeing and one national research project within policing in England and Wales to examine diversity, equality, and inclusion.

³⁴ Professor Les Graham established and leads the Policing Research Unit at Durham University.

12 Trust and Confidence seminar: 26 May 2023

On Friday 26 May, the findings of this report were presented to an extraordinary senior leadership event attended by staff and officers of superintendent rank and above and equivalent police staff grade, as well as by internal and external members of support networks, scrutiny panels and advisory groups.

The reason for bringing our senior leaders together in this way was to demonstrate our commitment to recognising and addressing the challenges we face in Essex, some of which are similar to those exposed in the Metropolitan Police. And in doing so, to consolidate our position, facilitate meaningful discussion, and to set expectations for the next phase of our response to Baroness Casey's review, with particular emphasis on the role of our leaders in delivering this.

The all-day, chief officer-led seminar focussed on five key thematic areas (discrimination, leadership, misconduct and grievance, specialist commands, and community understanding) each of which were presented to attendees before being discussed by command groups to consider the actions they could take to address each challenge. Crucially, to also consider what a successful outcome would look like and how they would measure that.

Throughout the day, those attending as members of support networks, scrutiny panels and advisory groups were invited to act as critical friends by offering alternative perspectives or by challenging our thoughts on how best to make improvements. Their contributions were invaluable on such complex issues and as a result, the proposals that were presented back to the group by each command were well-considered and open-minded.

As well as an appreciation for the ongoing task ahead, the output of the day was a set of draft proposals that will be developed further to underpin our framework for targeted action and accountability, with a view to revisiting progress at a second seminar in six months' time.

13 Conclusions and next steps

From the insight we have drawn throughout this report, the engagement that took place at our trust and confidence seminar, and from our ongoing work with partners to understand public perception, it is clear that like all other police forces, Essex Police are not immune to the challenges that manifest in the Metropolitan Police. And that it is all our responsibilities, whatever our rank or role within the organisation, to ensure that we continue to develop a culture which is diverse, inclusive, and equal; where our workforce feel supported and listened to; and where our public feel understood.

Taking independent assessments into account, and with our strong governance and accountability infrastructure, Essex Police are in a good position to meet this challenge and to drive improvements, where needed, through the organisation.

This has already begun with the outputs of our leadership seminar and, rather than relying on a separate strategy, will progress under the DCC's oversight of the existing professionalism portfolio. Senior leaders are now required to submit final proposals to be approved by the chief officer team, detailing the activity *they* will undertake to make improvements in each of their commands, including how they will achieve this, and how we will be able to measure success. The proposals are required to be realistic and specific, and to draw on existing policy and practice to focus explicitly on their own actions rather than suggestions about wider organisational change.

Allowing time for progress to be made, accountability against these proposals will initially be through a second trust and confidence seminar in November 2023 where senior leaders will be required to evidence their commitment to their actions and the success of their activity. Following this, existing professionalism governance processes will provide the necessary mechanisms for us to monitor progress against the wider professionalism, trust and confidence agenda, and means we can be held accountable not only to ourselves but to others.

14 Appendices

Appendix 1: Feedback

Verbal and written feedback was collated from several in-person and virtual meetings (listed below), as well as through the Federation survey and informal feedback opportunities. Verbatim comments have not been transcribed here, however are available on request, should they be required.

- Extraordinary Essex Police Senior Leadership Team meeting held on 23 March 2023.
- Strategic Independent Advisory Group held on 31st March 2023.
- Force Performance and Leadership forum held on 6th April 2023.
- Command Level Senior Leadership Team meetings- various.
- Professionalism, Trust and Confidence Seminar held on 26th May 2023.