

## **Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Update to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel**

**June 2022**

### PFCC Conferences

Thank you to everybody who attended our People, Partners and Prevention Conference at Colchester Stadium on 24 May. We hope you enjoyed it and got as much out of it as we did. Every attendee reported that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the conference overall and with the quality of the speakers. When asked, on a scale of 1-10, how likely they were to recommend a PFCC conference to a colleague, the average score was 9.45 - so we were delighted with it.

Fast approaching, on 1 July, we also have our "Exploited into Essex" conference focusing on Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Organised Immigration Crime and what we are doing in Essex to tackle these. It promises to be a thought-provoking day filled with presentations from national and international leaders in these fields, testimonies from survivors and opportunities to network and share best practice.

### Fire Reform White Paper

The Fire Reform White Paper was finally published last month, and the consultation window is open until the end of next month. As members of the Panel are probably aware, the key proposals include:

- Mirroring the model in policing, Chief Fire Officers becoming 'corporations sole', with strategic and operational planning being more clearly distinguished – the former being the responsibility of a single elected individual and the latter being the responsibility of an operationally independent Chief Fire Officer.
- All fire and rescue services should have a single, elected individual accountable for setting priorities; setting budgets and precepts; setting response standards; opening and closing fire stations, and the appointment and dismissal of the Chief Fire Officer. This could be a Mayor, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner or another individual (e.g. Council Leader / Cabinet Member).
- Consistent entry requirements for Fire and Rescue Service roles.
- The creation of an independent College of Fire and Rescue as a professional body to implement and improve standards across the sector.
- A 21st century Leadership Programme to provide skills and competence at the senior levels of fire and rescue services in a fair and consistent way, completion of which would be mandatory before becoming an Assistant Chief Fire Officer or above.
- A review of the structure and effectiveness of the current pay negotiations process.
- A statutory Code of Ethics for fire and rescue services, along with the introduction of a Fire and Rescue Services Oath to uphold the statutory Code of Ethics.
- Fire and Rescue Services should play a wider role in supporting health and public safety.

- A national data analytics capability, providing data-focused training, consistent approaches to structuring data, clear expectations around data governance and securing data-sharing agreements.
- A central fire and rescue research capability to collaborate with others, commission research, conduct reviews and collate findings across services.

#### Draft Victims Bill

On 25 May, the Ministry of Justice published the draft Victims Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny. There are three overarching strands to the Bill:

- o Amplifying victims' voices
- o Increasing support to victims
- o Strengthening oversight and accountability

The Bill also enshrines the Victims' Code of Practice in law, to ensure that victims are:

- o Helped to understand the criminal justice process;
- o Able to access support services (including specialist services);
- o Able to make their views heard in the criminal justice process, and
- o Able to challenge decisions which have a direct impact on them.

The Bill sets out a number of new duties and responsibilities for PCCs, including a new joint statutory duty on PCCs, local authorities and health commissioning bodies to work together to commission services relating to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Bill will also:

- o Introduce a statutory definition of IDVAs and ISVAs to promote consistency of role.
- o Place a duty on criminal justice agencies to review their compliance against the Victims' Code. PCCs will have a greater convening role in monitoring the compliance of criminal justice agencies with the Victims' Code, and further provision will be made for PCCs to monitor data on Victims' Code compliance and victim feedback.
- o Introduce new powers for joint thematic inspections by criminal justice inspectorates to assess the experiences and treatment of victims throughout the entire criminal justice process.
- o Introduce a new requirement for the Victims' Commissioner to lay an annual report in Parliament, along with a requirement for relevant departments and agencies to respond.

#### Successful funding bids

The Ministry of Justice has confirmed that Essex has been successful in applying for six additional IDVA / ISVA posts in the recent national funding round. This is a good result given that it represents additional funding of around £240k coming into the county, compared with the £175k we would have expected to receive based on the usual percentage allocation from national funding pots. This funding will be available to us for 2022-3, 2023-4 and 2024-5, so is especially welcome news.

We have also been successful in attracting additional MoJ investment of £503,698 p.a. for the next three years to support our work on domestic and sexual abuse. This is from the MoJ's domestic abuse

/ sexual violence victim support service fund. Again, this is higher than we would have expected if the funding was allocated according to normal central government ratios, which would have resulted in Essex being awarded about £383k - meaning we are getting almost twice as much over the 3 years.

#### Launch of the 999 performance league tables

Members of the Panel will no doubt have noted that the Home Office has now launched its 999 performance league tables, setting out how long it takes forces to answer 999 calls, as promised in the Beating Crime Plan. The data, provided by BT, shows the total number of calls received on a monthly basis between November 2021 and April 2022, broken down by the percentage of calls answered within the Home Office target of 10 seconds; calls answered in between 10 and 60 seconds, and the percentage of calls answered in over 60 seconds. The data also provides the mean waiting time and the medium waiting time. This data will likely be different from local data held by forces as force data does not take into account any lag time which may occur between the point of connection by BT and the call becoming visible in the force.

Essex appears at present to be middle ranking amongst forces nationally.

The tables will be published on a monthly basis moving forward. The annual report to my Performance and Resources Board on this topic is due in September and will doubtless include further analysis.