

'POLICE PERFORMANCE – GETTING A GRIP'
PUBLISHED BY HMICFRS ON 7TH JULY 2023
AVON & SOMERSET PCC RESPONSE DATED 1ST SEPTEMBER 2023

This report was a collection of the findings – from the most recent police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspection programme – of all forces in England and Wales.

The report highlighted innovative and promising practice from across the country and I was pleased to see Avon and Somerset Police highlighted for their work in reducing police attendance at mental health calls and embedding evaluation into force strategies.

I have recently discussed the innovative and promising, practice from other forces, with the Chief Constable and the Constabulary are establishing a new Operational Improvement Board to look at these initiatives to understand if and how they could work in Avon and Somerset.

This report contains three recommendations for police forces. These are set out below with the initial response to these after each of them.

It should be noted that I have a legal duty to respond to inspection reports within eight weeks of their publication. However, you will see the Constabulary have many more months to fully complete these recommendations: that's why a number of the responses are still a work in progress. With the support of my office, I oversee recommendations from the inspectorate on a continual basis to help ensure they are completed and will see the results of the audits mentioned.

Recommendation 2

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

- how they conduct exit interviews and use this information to identify patterns and trends in why people leave; and
- how they identify people who are thinking of leaving and the action they take, where appropriate, to encourage them to stay.

Processes should cover police officers, police staff, special constables and volunteers.

Response

In 2021 the Constabulary developed a new process, the objectives of which are to:

- Uncover people issues – such as lack of pay, development, promotion opportunities – to inform changes to people structures and policies.
- Identify people that might be disproportionately affected.
- Understand leavers' perceptions of the work itself – e.g. workload, work design, culture and team – to better inform managers on job design and motivation.
- Gain insight into the effectiveness of management and leadership to inform future selection, training and development of managers and identify areas for improvement and performance management.
- Use feedback from leavers to potentially detect and address areas of bullying, harassment or discrimination within the organisation.
- Gauge competition – of external companies and internal roles – where staff attrition is likely to continue in order to work on retaining staff in those areas.
- Utilise the innovation and honesty of those leaving to improve ways of working.
- Create and foster advocates for Avon and Somerset Police, long after they've left, in order to help with community liaison and making Avon and Somerset Police an employer of choice.

One aspect of this updated process was the launch of a new online exit questionnaire which is available for police staff, officers, PCSOs, specials and volunteers. The Constabulary have also developed a Qlik App (data visualisation) to easily analyse this data. This provides the opportunity to identify trends or patterns in the reasons people are leaving. It enables this data to be filtered by department, staff type and demographics to help identify issues in particular areas or for particular groups. In addition, the Constabulary have developed a questionnaire for those who leave a role, but stay in the organisation to gain feedback and insight as well as identifying career pathways.

The data from these surveys can also be compared to the annual workforce survey to track changes in people's experiences throughout the employee lifecycle and, ultimately, use predictive analytics to forecast future turnover issues and succession planning requirements. One of the questions in the people survey asks whether the respondent sees themselves working for the organisation in the next twelve months. This data can be filtered and compared with other areas of the survey, such as employee engagement, to assess why people may want to leave, and this can then be linked with the data from the exit survey.

In addition, a Career Aspiration Survey is currently completed by student officers which enables people to share their career intent, including the length of time they intend to stay in the organisation and allows a proactive response if they are dissatisfied or indicate they

would intend to leave in the near future. The intention is to extend the Career Aspiration Survey wider to all police officer roles.

The Constabulary also have a rejoiner scheme which allows police officers who have left to apply to rejoin within a period of five years. This aids a more open and flexible workforce and has seen a steady flow of rejoiners to the force. In addition the Constabulary is open for constables to retire and rejoin as officers. So far eight officers have taken up this offer which has included retention of people with firearms, surveillance, mounted and detective skills along with the experience gained over the length of service all those officers bring. The Constabulary are considering opening at all ranks subject to need for skills and experience.

Recommendation 3

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

Response

The Constabulary's Corporate Strategy includes a priority of people engagement and wellbeing, protecting the workforce to create better working conditions, improving workforce retention and productivity and building individuals personal resilience with their mental and physical health. Central to achieving this priority is the Oscar Kilo (OK) Blue Light Wellbeing Framework which shows a commitment to health and wellbeing tailored specifically to emergency services. The Constabulary completes an annual self-assessment against this framework which helps to identify and implement improvements.

As part of this work the Constabulary have actively reviewed wellbeing support for officers and staff and below sets out some of the findings and action taken.

The Constabulary has committed to becoming a trauma informed organisation. Trauma informed practice aims to increase awareness of how trauma can negatively impact individuals and mitigating against harm where possible. The approach aims to improve the accessibility and quality of services by creating culturally sensitive, safe services that people trust and want to use; including the people who work in for the organisation. A steering group – chaired by the Chief Officer for People and Organisational Development – is leading this work.

Over the last three years the Constabulary have had an increasing demand for Occupational Health services particularly for psychological support. As a result of this the Constabulary have started identifying where automation can make processes more efficient and will be doubling the number of Psychological Therapists to six. The wider model of Occupational Health is also being reviewed and there are proposals to introduce a counselling service – alongside the Psychological Therapists – to support officers and staff experiencing work related mental health issues.

Data is proactively used to provide a picture of employee wellbeing and is available for managers to analyse through Qlik and is reported as part of the employee lifecycle at each People Committee. The information is used to improve support to individuals. As an example the HR Advisory team last year reviewed long-term absence cases related to Psychological Disorder. As a result Health Attendance meetings were put in place which

include Occupational Health, HR and operational leads. These have enabled the Directorates to gain a better grip and understanding of high-risk individuals. Another improvement to data reporting particularly in relation to high-risk cases and identifying correlations to support a more proactive approach has been the introduction of a new case management tracker within HR in collaboration with the Professional Standards Department.

The Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) Programme has been implemented by the Constabulary to provide support and assistance for colleagues after a traumatic event. Additional mechanisms are in place to proactively support officers and staff including:

- 20 Single Points of Contact who are responsible for engaging with their directorates to promote health and wellbeing and to deliver initiatives;
- over 40 trained Mental Health First Aiders, and over 60 Welfare Officers; and
- new wellbeing journey webpages which include internal and external resources for physical and mental support for line managers to signpost individuals, and for individuals to proactively help themselves and others with their wellbeing.

The Constabulary also have relationships with external health care providers such as Able Futures who provide support to people living and working with mental health difficulties and Surfwell which is a surf therapy support service for people struggling with mental health.

Recommendation 6

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

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

Response

The Constabulary have reviewed and revised their performance frameworks and governance processes during the summer of 2023. The process is structured and prioritised around the PEEL themes which allows the Constabulary to join up their own PEEL Areas for Improvement with the local performance priorities. This framework also incorporates performance against my Police and Crime Plan and the national priorities for policing. The outcomes and Key Performance Indicators are a key part of the new governance and there is clear ownership and accountability.

This will be reported in the Integrated Performance and Quality Report (IPQR) through the Constabulary Management Board (CMB). This report also comes to my Governance and Scrutiny Board which allows me to scrutinise it and hold the Chief Constable to account for the outcomes.

This response is published on the OPCC website <https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/reports-publications/hmicfrs-reports/>