



Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026



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My vision

BJ Harrington, Chief Constable, Essex Police

Essex is not just one of the largest counties in the country, it is one of the most diverse too. We have the contrasts of affluent and deprived communities, international air and sea ports and quiet coastal villages and towns as well as the complexity of a county that is three quarters rural, but that also feeds London thousands of commuters every day from our own growing urban centres.

Our diversity is everything: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Our society is changing. I have a vision of a united Essex. We will celebrate our diversity and ensure established and newer communities interact and grow safely together with mutual understanding, respect and dignity for all.

The central tenet of policing in the UK is policing with consent. Our power to fulfil our functions and duties is built upon the trust and confidence of those whom we serve. We must police with the consent of all communities, and demonstrate this in our actions.


That's why I believe it's important we have a Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy.

Any form of inequality or disproportionality can harm community cohesion. We commit to resolving these inequalities. Sometimes our operations may involve stopping ten people to find one weapon and we sincerely apologise for the inconvenience this causes.

Our intention is to catch criminals, help people and keep people safe. Better intelligence and better cooperation will help us achieve this.

Our commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion dates back many years but unfortunately some of the challenges our society faces are centuries old, and remain unresolved. As we saw in June 2020 following the death in the USA of George Floyd, while there may be no direct comparison between policing in the UK and policing in the USA, we are certainly seeing anger directed not just at the police but at a number of institutions. Whether it is the disparity in the number of young black men who enter the criminal justice system or recent reports on the impact of COVID-19 on different sections of society, there are clearly long running challenges which must be addressed. This kind of disparity appears in so many different places, and its effects are felt by many people on a daily basis.

I lead a team who need not only to understand our communities, but represent them too. For too long we have lagged behind in the recruitment and development of people from different backgrounds. We will move faster to address this, and to seek out and set right injustice or prejudice in all its forms.



BJ Harrington

Chief Constable, Essex Police



Journey so far... Towards Excellence

Our refreshed strategy provides an opportunity to shout about the progress that we have made to date and, where needed, refines our focus on what we still need to deliver within the remaining period to November 2027. Please read and discuss its content with your teams and ensure that you apply its inclusion and dignity for all principles in all that you do. Everyone working at Essex Police is expected to be able to articulate how this strategy applies to our respective roles, and we should all be proactive in delivering its objectives.

Significant developments since 2020 have been the introduction of our annual Towards Excellence conference, which brings together policing, partner agencies, and diverse communities in one collaborative space and the delivery of diversity training across all officers and staff. We've borrowed our conference title for this strategy update because that's what we are doing; heading towards excellence and I am determined to get us there.

A further development was our attainment of Disability Confident 'Leader' status. We should all be proud of this achievement, but I would caution against complacency as on occasions our colleagues with disabilities still experience thoughtless obstacles to their full inclusion. This must change. Colleague with no disabilities will be expected to demonstrate that they are consciously alert and informed about the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

I am immensely proud of the work we are doing with our people to shape and build a diverse and inclusive culture. Since the launch of our strategy, we have been working hard to achieve the objectives within it.

With the support of our many staff support networks and through the endeavours of our teams, we have set some very challenging objectives. We are applying the action driven culture of Essex Police to achieve hard and challenging goals. We are taking on the wicked issues; understanding, and where identified, reducing unjustified disparity in the use of police powers; recruiting and promoting more officers and staff who are female or from minority backgrounds and ensuring we improve the confidence of black and minority ethnic people in how they perceive that they would be treated by Essex Police. In short making sure we to come back to Peel's principle to 'maintain the respect of the public'.

None of these are easy issues, but I know our ambition is high and slowly but surely, we are seeing results. With better understanding and insight around use of powers, more women, and people from the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities joining and progressing in our force, and greater willingness of disabled or LGBTQ+ colleagues to declare and record who they are as they become more confident in a more inclusive Essex Police. These are all achievements on our journey towards excellence, but we are not there yet.

I said that we are willing to take on the difficult issues and to challenge ourselves. I fully support the National Police Chiefs Council's Race Action Plan and the commitments by Chief Constables it contains. We will apply its principles in all that we do, and across all protected characteristics as we further our journey Towards Excellence. In fact, we have already championed many of the initiatives it contains. We have the support of independent advisory groups in our governance, providing feedback and scrutiny and a 'different' perspective in our use of force, our complaints processes and our wider operational delivery.

There has been, and remains, discrimination and intolerance in policing. We are not perfect and there is more to do. There remain things that in relation to all of the many different people in our force and in our community that we must change, to improve and to make better. We must remove the people who discriminate, who abuse and simply do not uphold our values and those of policing. We need to tackle hate in our communities and ensure people feel and are safe. I commit that we will keep working hard to do this as force and with the support and guidance of our communities.

BJ Harrington

Chief Constable, Essex Police

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex



Roger Hirst

Police, Fire, and Crime

Commissioner for Essex

Creating safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build success and wellbeing for all. Embedded in this vision is a need to work with, alongside and for local communities.

This vision is set out clearly in our Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024. This clear strategic focus is helping Essex Police to attract a more diverse workforce and better reflect the people who live, work, and travel in our county, improving policing and increasing the confidence those diverse communities have.

As this Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy demonstrates, Essex Police is already working hard to eliminate discrimination, achieve equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations within our communities.

However, we know that there is still much to do. We know that certain sections of our community are less likely to report crime committed against them. We know that not everybody feels the same confidence in the police and may think twice before engaging with officers. We also know certain types of crime such as rape and sexual assaults are significantly under reported and if we want to change this we need to ensure women from all communities feel the confidence to come forward and know, that if they do, they will be believed. I am pleased that Essex Police has committed to making the changes needed so as to make this a reality.

In this country we police by consent and our communities and our police force work together for the good of all. This strategy sets out clearly how Essex Police will continue to work hard with communities to strengthen relationships, build confidence and ensure we can all work together to create a society where everybody works together to push out crime.

I welcome and support this strategy from Essex Police and hope our communities will help embrace its implementation.



Diversity and Inclusion Commander, Essex Police



Supt. Darren Deex

Diversity and Inclusion

Command, Essex Police

Tackling inequality and creating a more diverse and inclusive society is one of the biggest challenges of our time. Diversity, equality, and inclusion is therefore central to our strategy, and we recognise the importance of evolving in line with our changing population. We know that not everyone's experience matches their expectations or is as fulfilling as it should be. We know we're not getting the most from some of the brilliant and talented people we attract, or that we lose them far too early. The principle of 'policing by consent' is fundamental, and so it is vital that Essex Police is seen as legitimate by all the communities we serve.

To do so, the policing workforce must be seen as representative of all those communities and policing must be seen to be fair, unbiased, and equally accountable to all. More needs to be done to achieve even greater diversity across our staff, as well as retaining these staff by creating the conditions, culture, training, and opportunities to enable them to thrive and progress. This also means having systems, culture, and processes in place to challenge and root out poor performance, practice, and unacceptable behaviour.

But this strategy needs to go beyond the internal workings of Essex Police. It also needs to address how we will increase legitimacy within communities to deliver fair, responsive, and transparent services. This means having the best kind of local scrutiny to ensure police are using powers in a fair, proportionate way and treating all people equally with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

It also means undertaking equality impact assessments to ensure all communities have proper access to services including victims of crime and working with communities and partners to solve problems and create a culture of trust.

Ultimately, it means instilling a culture within Essex Police such that every police officer and member of staff takes personal responsibility for ensuring that we are striving to be representative of the community and acting at all times with equal respect and fairness to every member of the public.

I hope these commitments show that we're serious about the action we must take to be more representative of our communities and to create a more inclusive working environment where each person feels welcomed, valued, and can thrive.

This is a plan for everyone, and everyone should consider themselves included – for all our staff, for those we hope will join us in the future and ultimately for our communities across Essex and beyond.

What is our strategic ambition?

Our ambitions for diversity, equality and inclusion are embedded within and directly support our Force Plan. They are a plan for action, to ensure that in Essex Police we:

- Continually build trust and confidence, to protect and serve with the consent of all communities.
- Actively promote diversity, equality, and inclusion so that all people are valued.
- Listen to and better understand the needs of our communities, our partners, and our people.
- Value difference in everyone, acting fairly and respectfully in everything we do.
- Ensure we support each other to be the best we can be in our personal and professional aspirations.
- Reflect and represent the widest diversity within our county and country in every rank, role and grade, to demonstrate that the public are the police and the police are the public. Tackle discrimination, disparity, and prejudice.
- Are impartial in how we use our powers, deliver services, and engage with the public and each other.
- Are open and transparent and willing to continually develop, learn and improve, acknowledging mistakes, and making our services accessible to all.
- Use data, intelligence, and evidence as well as information from all communities and our people to inform our decisions.
- Discharge our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Diversity, equality and inclusion will be an integral and explicit part of how we deliver the Force Plan and achieve the Police and Crime Plan priorities, underpinned by the College of Policing Code of Ethics.



Our objectives*

Improve inclusive culture and increase awareness and understanding of diversity and equality by nurturing an equitable and inclusive workplace culture which tackles violence against women and girls and promotes dignity for all.

Outcome: increase in meaningful community engagement that creates action

Adopt and advance the Police Race Action Plan and anti-racism principles.

Outcome: Improve outcomes for Black people who work within or interact with policing.



Increase satisfaction and confidence amongst protected groups, wider communities, and victims of crime. Tackle hate crime and address any complaints and concerns raised.

Outcome: Increase in feelings of trust and confidence in the police.

Attract, recruit, progress, and retain a more diverse workforce that better reflects our communities to improve confidence in Essex Police.

Outcome: Increase positive public perception of Essex Police as an employer for all people.

Narrow the disparity between protected groups and non-protected groups in respect of the use of police powers such as stops, searches, and the use of force. Improve the experience of policing services without reducing the legitimate use of police powers to protect communities.

Outcome: Increase in feelings of safety and reduction in crime.

*Public sector equality objectives

Strategic aims and objectives



Attract, recruit, progress, and retain a more diverse workforce

Attract, recruit, progress and retain a more diverse workforce that better reflects our communities to improve confidence in Essex Police.

- Improve the representation of black, Asian, minority ethnic, and female officers and staff to be more reflective of the economically active population in Essex.
- Improve the representation of black, Asian, and minority ethnic and female colleagues in specialist roles and leadership positions.
- Improve the confidence of officers and staff to self-declare sexual orientation, disability, and religion to better understand and reflect the diversity of the force.
- Improve knowledge and understanding of different religions and beliefs, to support those of faith in our community in an informed way.
- Increase the proportion of people who choose to declare their ethnicity or other data relevant to diversity and inclusion in force records, use of powers records, or suspect, victim, and complainant records.



Narrow the disparity

Narrow the disparity between protected groups and non-protected groups in respect of the use of police powers such as stops, searches and the use of force. Improve the experience of policing services without reducing the legitimate use of police powers to protect communities.

- Understand, explain and reduce the disparity in use of force, stop and search, and conducted energy devices (CEDs) between white and black, Asian, and minority ethnic people.



Increase satisfaction and confidence

Increase satisfaction & confidence amongst protected groups, wider communities and victims of crime. Tackle hate crime and address any complaints and concerns raised.

- Increase the confidence of black, Asian, minority ethnic people, and females in the service they will receive from Essex Police as measured by the independent force survey.
- Increase the confidence of black, Asian, minority ethnic people, and females, working to increase the number of those who feel they would be treated fairly if they made a complaint, as measured by the independent force survey.



**Adopt and
advance**

Adopt and advance the NPCC Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2018-2025 alongside the Police Race Action Plan 2022.

- Prioritise our work to reflect our objectives (the public sector equality duty objectives) within this document and set out our work in the delivery plan.
- Implement and conduct a quarterly review of ongoing action aligned with the Police Race Action Plan
- Commit to and develop the NPCC anti-racism principles alongside the NPCC Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy.



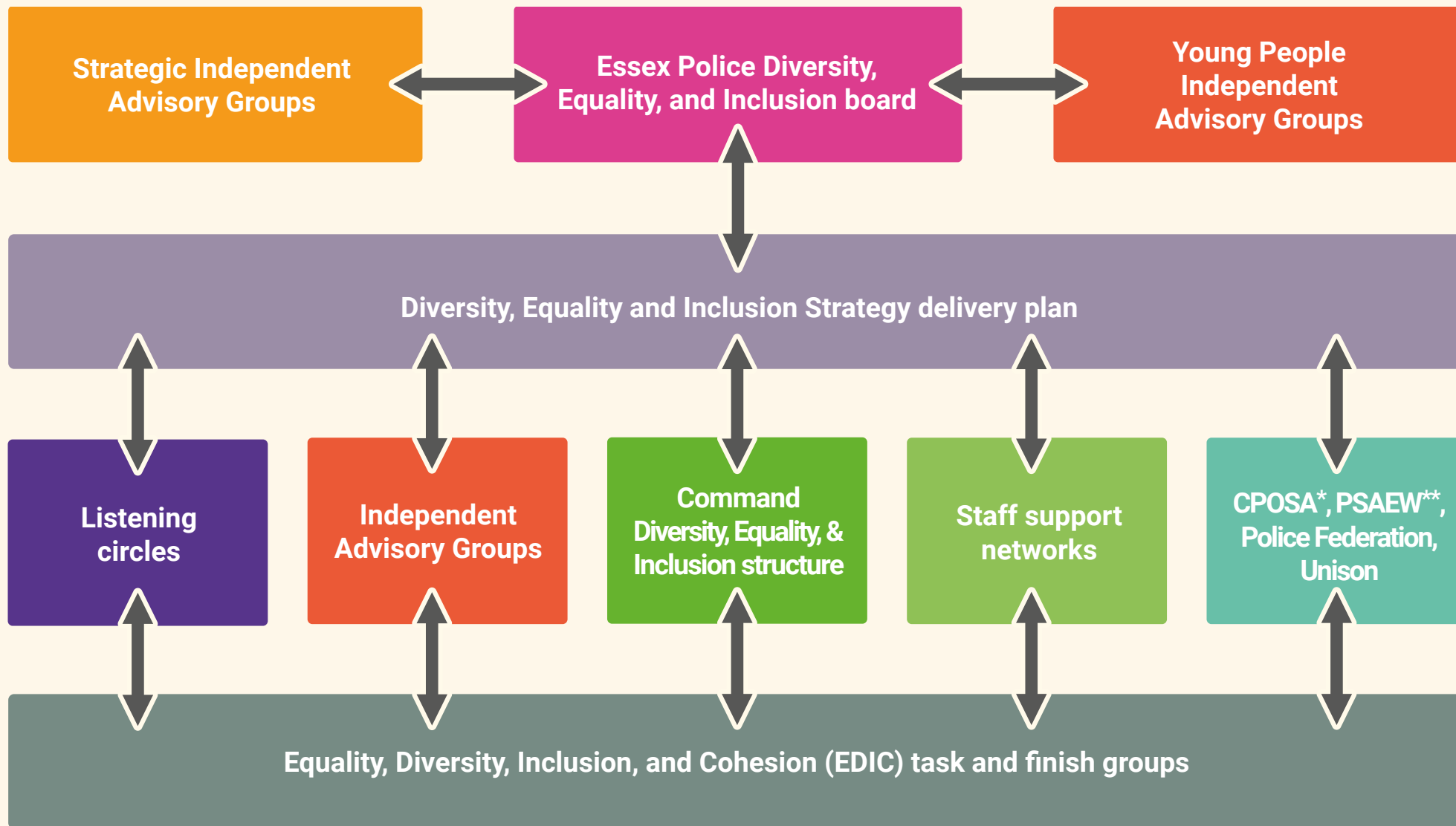


Improve inclusive culture and increase awareness and understanding of diversity and equality

Improve inclusive culture and increase awareness and understanding of diversity and equality by nurturing an equitable and inclusive workplace culture which tackles violence against women and girls and promotes dignity for all.

- Diversity, equality, and inclusion refresher training to be delivered to every officer, staff member and volunteer annually, including greater understanding on intersectionality between all protected characteristics.
- Leaders to undertake annual diversity, equality, and inclusion training and utilise the diversity dashboard to monitor our progress against our objectives.
- Deliver an annual Essex Police diversity, Equality, and Inclusion conference.
- Provide training to every member of staff over the next two years regarding the history of relationships between the police and black communities, to improve officer, staff member and volunteer understanding about the impact and trauma of racism.
- Develop effective and representative Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) at strategic and geographic levels, and create Essex-wide Youth Independent Advisory Group representation.

Delivering on our strategic aims: The Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion board structure



Leadership and governance

The Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy is of vital importance to Essex Police and as such responsibility for delivering our strategic aims will rest with colleagues at every level and in every department. There will be a governance and leadership system which will be overseen by the Chief Constable, who will be accountable to the PFCC for delivery. This reflects the importance of this work in maintaining public confidence and our ethos of policing with consent.

There will be representation at Chief Officer and Head of Command / Department level at the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion board as well as three independent members from the Strategic and Youth IAGs. In addition the force will welcome additional representation from individuals or organisations who are not part of either group.

The Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan will be owned by the board and delivered by the force, supported by the Diversity and Inclusion team and the support networks and staff associations.

To make this happen, the force will establish Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Cohesion (EDIC) groups (task and finish groups) to support the delivery of the plan.

Together, we will protect and serve everyone in Essex, and we will police with the consent of all communities.



Support networks

Agile Working Support Network		Men's Forum	
Catholic Police Guild		Multi-Ethnic Support Association (MESA)	
Chief Police Officers' Staff Association		Multi-faith Network	
Christian Police Association (CPA)		Police Federation (Essex)	
Disability & Carers Network		Police Peer Support Network	
Help Forum		Police Superintendents' Association	
LGBTQ+ Network		UNISON	
Menopause Support Group		Women's Leadership and Development Forum (WLDF)	

Led by the force lead chaplain, Essex Police has a network of chaplains across the force who are available to support officers and staff in all areas of work and personal matters.