

WEST MERCIA POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

30 OCTOBER 2023

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION REPORT (DEI)

Introduction

1. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) is a central focus of the PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan, with a number of commitments included under the following priorities: 'Putting victims and survivors first' and 'Reassuring West Mercia's Communities'.
2. The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) has a key role in advancing Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DE&I) across West Mercia. Alongside a number of statutory obligations, the PCC's unique position in respect of the public and his convening powers, lend themselves to champion and drive cultural change across the organisation.
3. The PCC has set out his commitment to promoting DEI in his Safer West Mercia Plan 2021-2025. This includes a specific commitment to publish equality objectives in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

Equality Act Requirements

4. The PCC has a number of statutory duties in respect of DEI. One such duty is the requirement to prepare and publish equality objectives that should be achieved to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
5. Figure 1 sets out the PCC's equality objectives for 2021-2025. The objectives consider national and local DEI strategies, as well as feedback from those working within the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC).
6. Mechanisms are in place to measure progress against the equality objectives, and this is monitored by the PCC on a regular basis. This document will be reviewed and refreshed at least every 4 years in line with legislation.

7. The PCC continuously scrutinises force performance aligned to his equality objectives, as well as the force's own equality objectives as set out in their local DEI strategy.

Figure 1 - OPCC Equality Objectives

Our Communities

We will:

- Ensure that every victim has access to services they need to help them cope and recover, regardless of geography, personal characteristics or circumstance
- Ensure representation of all demographics and communities across West Mercia in plans for victim services, acknowledging their needs and challenges
- Support the PCC to be visible and accessible to all communities in West Mercia
- Ensure all individuals and communities who contact us are dealt with fairly, equally and respectfully
- Develop new platforms and outlets to engage with under-represented voices from our communities and ensure their needs and concerns are understood and acted upon
- Develop and implement a new engagement strategy to foster good relationships across diverse communities, and ensure the PCC represents everyone in West Mercia.

Our Organisation

We Will:

- Attract and retain staff and volunteers that reflect our diverse communities
- Ensure equality of opportunity for all staff and volunteers throughout every stage of employment; from recruitment, retention and promotion, to exit from the service
- Recognise the needs of diverse groups within our workforce and ensure appropriate support is available for all staff and volunteers
- Provide training to increase the knowledge and confidence of all staff on issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Cultivate an inclusive culture where all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity and respect
- Recognise, challenge and effectively address any inappropriate behaviour, language or dignity at work issues that may arise.
- Maximise the transparency of our organisation to ensure our activities and decisions can be scrutinised and feedback used to improve the service provided to the public.

Our Partners

We Will:

- Work with local, regional and national partners to champion diversity, equality and inclusion in policing and community safety.
- Engage with partners and stakeholders to understand, and where possible, address disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System and improve the service to the public.
- Support the PCC to hold the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police to account for the exercise of all duties relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Require all service providers, organisations or individuals who enter into a contract, or receive funding from the PCC to comply with the Equality Act and any further terms and conditions related to equality and diversity as set by the PCC.

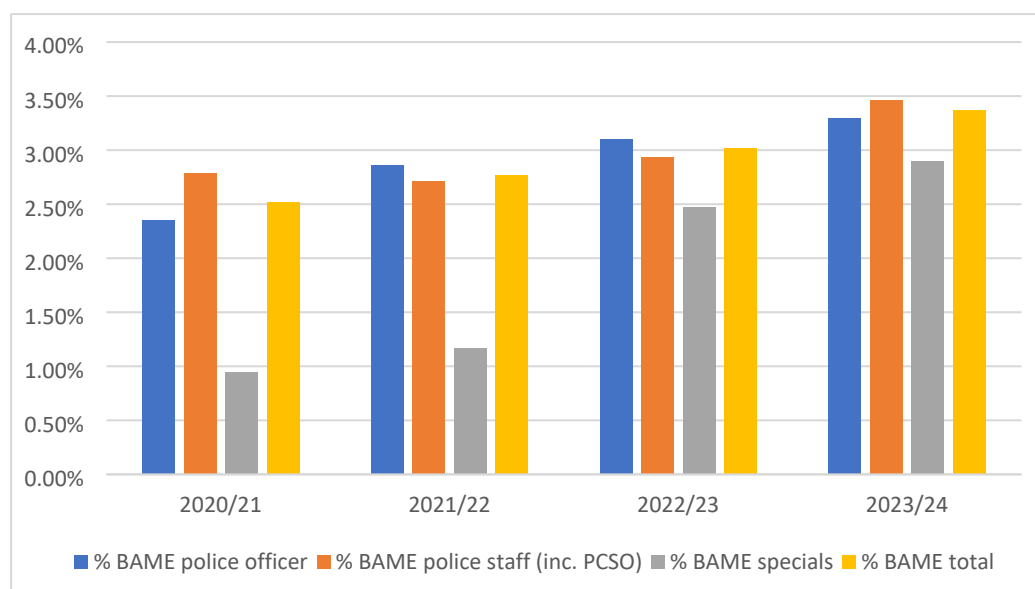
Force Governance

8. The PCC's Safer West Mercia Plan sets out policing priorities and provides strategic direction to inform West Mercia Police's local Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2021 - 2025. The four-year strategy outlines three key elements for the force (communities, organisation and partner), aligned to the national strategy. This provides the force with a broad framework for DEI which is driven through governance arrangements set out below.
9. The PCC has a responsibility to hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the DEI commitments within the Safer West Mercia Plan, as well as delivery of local and national DEI strategies.
10. The Chief Constable shares the PCC's commitment to advancing DEI in West Mercia. Following the Chief's appointment in September 2021, the Chief Constable established 'Inclusive' as the fifth organisational value reflecting early observations of the organisation and her personal commitment to this core value.
11. Following this revision to the organisational values, the Chief Constable commissioned a review of the force's DEI governance arrangements to ensure there was clear direction and scrutiny. This review resulted in the establishment of a six-monthly Inclusion Strategy Board (ISB), chaired by the Chief Constable and attended by Chief Officers and senior managers. The ISB sets the strategic priorities in relation to internal/organisational DEI issues and external/ operational DEI issues. The PCC is represented at the ISB by the DEI lead within his policy team.
12. Two Inclusion Delivery Boards sit below the ISB and are tasked with developing and overseeing the tactical plans necessary to deliver against the identified DEI priorities. The external, operationally focused group is chaired by the ACC for Local Policing and the internal, organisational group is chaired by the Director of Business Services. These quarterly tactical delivery boards capture progress and report to the ISB.

Black and minority ethnic (BAME) representation data

13. A key commitment in the Safer West Mercia Plan is to ensure that the force continues to drive progress in workforce representation; ensuring that officers, staff and volunteers reflect the demographics of the communities they serve, and that measurable progress is being made to deliver the force's Equality Objectives 2021-2025.
14. An update on workforce data for West Mercia Police (illustrated below) was requested by the Panel, with a focus on black and minority ethnic (BAME) representation within the force.
15. The force aims to have a workforce that represents the communities served, as set out in the Census. The Census data for 2011 recorded the local population in West Mercia from a minority ethnic background was 3.8%. The Census data was refreshed in 2021 (published 28 June 2022). The latest Census data shows the proportion of the general population from a minority ethnic background in the West Mercia Policing area is now 5.8%. West Mercia Police are reviewing their aspirations / targets in relation to representation in light of this newly released data as previously the force was working towards a target of at least 3.8% BAME officers / staff.
16. West Mercia Police's workforce from 2020 – 2023 is as follows, which shows a distinct increase year on year in the number of officers and staff from BAME backgrounds.

Percentage of officers and staff from a BAME background



The table below shows what is visually represented in the chart above.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
% BAME police officer	2.35%	2.86%	3.10%	3.30%
% BAME police staff (inc. PCSO)	2.79%	2.71%	2.94%	3.46%
% BAME specials	0.95%	1.17%	2.47%	2.90%
% BAME total	2.52%	2.77%	3.02%	3.37%

N.B Data as of April each financial year. Please see Appendix 1 for raw data volumes.

17. Whilst this progress is encouraging, the proportion of officers from a black or ethnic minority background is below the force's aspirations to reflect the communities in West Mercia as set out in the Census data (2011 and 2021). The 2021 Census data confirms an even more diverse West Mercia community, highlighting that there is still work to be done to establish a more representative police force.
18. Organisationally, significant work is taking place within the force's Positive Action team to improve attraction and recruitment across all strands of diversity. The 'Step' programme aims to provide support to potential new recruits and existing officers and staff who identify with a protected characteristic, e.g., female, BAME, dyslexic, LGBTQ+ etc. The programme has 3 phases: Step In, Step Up, and Step Across. Each of these phases are underpinned by the principles of positive action, and examples of activity under each element of the programme is set out below.

Step In

19. Significant work has been undertaken to identify diverse communities across the force area, to inform targeted attraction and recruitment activity. Candidates in the recruitment pipeline who identify as having a protected characteristic have access to a closed Facebook group which includes a vast amount of information regarding the assessment centre process, online and in person recruitment events/ discovery sessions.
20. The positive action team maintains contact with candidates in the pipeline, by way of frequent phone calls to ensure candidates remained engaged in what can be a lengthy recruitment process.
21. The positive action team also run discovery sessions to provide in depth information on various aspects of the application process. A number of these discovery sessions have been supported by leads from various staff networks, which has proved incredibly successful.

Step Up

22. The positive action team have delivered an internal promotion conference 'You can't be what you can't see'. The event was aimed at positive action candidates (officers and staff) who are most underrepresented in the force rank structure. The conference has led to a considerable increase in applicants for the upcoming Sergeants' process. The conference is supplemented by more frequent information sessions to provide information to prospective candidates regarding the promotion process.

Step Across

23. A series of blogs using real officer / staff experiences are being developed to encourage applicants from underrepresented groups to apply for specialist roles.
24. This work is supported local and nationally by the Police Race Action Plan, which includes a range of actions that focus on developing officers' and staff members' understanding of black history and they produced a bespoke black history product which provides a mandatory role/rank specific programme for all staff to challenge assumptions and bias. There is also the opportunity for every Black officer and member of staff to be offered access to the BME network and for black officers, to complete a survey to capture their experiences within policing to assist in developing internal culture and inclusivity.
25. The #HeForShe initiative has also seen multiple learning events focused on addressing misogyny and health inequalities. More than 100 allies are now in place within the Force, a staff toolkit is being released and an impactful video has been delivered, which has been highlighted and shared as an example of good practice.

PCC Scrutiny

26. The PCC has regular Assurance and Accountability meetings (A&A) with the Chief Constable. DEI has featured at these meetings throughout the PCC's 2 terms, including multiple formal and public sessions in 2020 and 2022. The PCC is in the process of preparation for a further A&A meeting focused on DEI in October 2023 which will be a valuable opportunity to review progress made.
27. To supplement the formal meetings set out above, the PCC's A&A programme includes an ad-hoc, virtual element. The virtual process is run via email with the Chief Constable providing a written response to the issues raised. This channel has also been utilised to raise issues in regard to DEI, with a particular focus on utilising local and national uplifts to improve representation between 2020 - 2022.
28. The last formal DEI A&A session was in October 2022. The meeting focused on key DEI related performance areas including representation. The PCC sought reassurance from the Chief Constable on the following areas;
 - Transparency and scrutiny of the force's resources and governance arrangement to deliver against local and national DEI strategy, including use of independent scrutiny.
 - Development of the workforce, to ensure that there was improved representation across all protected characteristics.
 - Utilisation of local and national officer uplifts to support DEI and consultation with underrepresented groups.
29. This work concluded that progress and plans had been implemented, understanding had improved and that a governance framework had been established with plans for further activity scheduled.

30. The next Thematic A&A will focus on public-facing, operational DEI activity with a focus on a number of areas including police use of powers such as Stop & Search, use of force including arrest rates to understand any disproportionality or inequalities.

31. The A&A will also explore the force's approach to engaging with seldom heard communities, with a particular focus on black heritage communities. The PCC has requested further information on the force's activity with communities and groups who may be vulnerable to particular types of targeted crime or that have a negative view of policing.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Black and minority ethnic representation data

Risk Management Implications

None.

Financial Implications

None.

Legal Implications

None

Equality Implications

The above report supports the PCC in complying with the objectives of the Equality Act.

Contact Points for the Report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.

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