

Research Report R001/2025

Pay and Morale Survey 2024 – Headline Report January 2025

Author:

Police Federation of England and Wales

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ABOUT US

POLICE FEDERATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) is the staff association for police constables, sergeants, inspectors (including chief inspectors), and special constables. PFEW has been successfully representing officers and influencing the policing agenda for over 100 years, having first established in 1919. Voicing the views of more than 145,000 rank and file police officers, PFEW is the official body that exists to represent and support police officers on issues such as pay, allowances, terms and conditions, as well as advising and lobbying on operational policing issues and influencing legislation. It also provides training on equality, promotion, discipline, and health and safety.

SOCIAL MARKET FOUNDATION

The Social Market Foundation (SMF) is a non-partisan think tank. We believe that fair markets, complemented by open public services, increase prosperity and help people to live well. We conduct research and run events looking at a wide range of economic and social policy areas, focusing on economic prosperity, public services and consumer markets. The SMF is resolutely independent, and the range of backgrounds and opinions among our staff, trustees and advisory board reflects this.

FOREWORD FROM THE POLICE FEDERATION OF ENGLAND AND WALES

This 2024 report is once again written in collaboration with the Social Market Foundation (SMF). SMF are the leading cross-party think-tank, and they outline an impartial picture of the issues we face. This collaboration helps provide an outside perspective, which we regard as highly important if we are to have a comprehensive conversation about the conditions in policing. Incorporated in the survey this year were questions to gauge our members' views on the mechanisms in place that deal with police officer pay and conditions, as well as new topical questions that are of relevance to our membership.

This report stems directly from our vision, which is about being at the heart of policing, making sure police officers' views are heard, and securing for them the best possible conditions of service through impacting debates directly. By presenting the views of police officers from every Force, we simultaneously address the three main facets of PFEW's 2025 Strategy, the Member's agenda, the Federation agenda and the Public agenda. The report presents views related to the five components of the Members' agenda: Pay & Reward; Conditions; Health, Safety & Wellbeing; Equality; and Making our voices heard. It additionally addresses the Federation agenda by improving ways of working, through the timely collaboration with SMF. Lastly, it also aims to achieve the three key goals of the Public agenda, namely, to have a police service to be proud of by incorporating the view from the front line; to have a partnership with the public; and to set the political agenda by directly influencing public conversations.

The Pay and Morale survey is conducted annually since 2014 and is one of the largest surveys of its kind. Considering the importance and the challenges of policing, this survey continues to be a key and timely contribution to the public debate.

Policing continues to face numerous challenges and police officers work in a very demanding context. The impacts of high inflation and relatively slow pay growth are still causing dissatisfaction amongst officers; over three quarters (76 per cent) of respondents expressed being unhappy with their basic pay, whilst 65 per cent expressed dissatisfaction with their overall remuneration. Police morale continues to be low like last year, with 57 per cent reporting their personal morale as "low" or "very low." This is important to note because these factors have a significant impact on recruitment and retention rates for the police service. In fact, almost a quarter (23 per cent) of respondents said that they intend to leave policing either 'within the next two years' or 'as soon as [they] can'. This is problematic because the need for experienced, well-trained, and well-equipped officers remains an important concern within policing.

As the PFEW we are a strong voice for our members in raising these issues, as shown in our communication to the PRRB. We remain watchful of the issues our members are facing and diligent in our demands for those issues to be addressed.

John Partington and Mel Warnes, The National Secretaries Office, PFEW.

FOREWORD FROM SMF

Thinktanks exist to help shape public policy, and the first step in doing so is to build an understanding of the state of the public realm. The PFEW Pay & Morale survey of over 35,000 responses provides an unparalleled insight into the thoughts and lives of the police officers tasked with tackling crime and maintaining public order. This is the second year that SMF have worked with PFEW in analysing the survey. The outlook is unfortunately grim.

Just 15 per cent of officers have 'high' or 'very high' morale. Indeed, the only time when a morale is high among the majority of officers is during initial training. Life satisfaction has improved marginally, from 5.2 out of 10 in 2023 to 5.5 now, but compared to 7.5 among the general population, these results are woeful. Mental health issues are rife – four in five officers reported experiencing anxiety, low mood, stress or other struggles.

The survey explores a number of causes. Dissatisfaction with pay remains widespread. Officers say that forces are understaffed, with this playing through to a sense of overwork, impacts on rest entitlement, and a failure to pair on shifts. Almost all respondents do not feel respected by both the public and the government.

If these issues are not addressed, more officers could leave the police force – nearly a quarter (23 per cent) are planning on leaving within two years. The new government has pledged 13,000 officers to community policing, including several thousand new recruits. These goals will become challenging if they are not able to address the deep challenge of police morale.

Theo Bertram, Director, SMF.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Table 1: Executive Summary KPIs

Executive Summary	Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Morale	% 'own morale' low	58%	57%	0% ¹	There has been little change in officers' morale – a majority rate it as low or very low
Pay & Reward	% dissatisfied with 'overall remuneration'	78%	65%	-13%	Lower dissatisfaction with overall remuneration driven by constables, but no improvement on views of basic pay or pensions
Conditions	Impact of workload & responsibilities on morale (% negative)	66%	66%	0%	Heavy workload remains a problem that is harming morale
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	Life satisfaction (out of 10)	5.2	5.5	0.3	Slight improvement in life satisfaction but it is far below the general public (7.5 ²) and armed forces (6.1 ³)
Equality	Difference in % rating morale 'high' or 'very high' between highest and lowest segment (average)	6%	5%	-1%	The morale level is low across all groups, although the gap has narrowed between younger and older officers – little change elsewhere ⁴
Making Our Voices Heard	% disagree that police are respected by the public	85%	84%	0% ⁵	A substantial majority of officers feel that they are not respected by the public

¹ Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from -0.4%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 57.6% and 57.2% respectively.

² Office of National Statistics (2024). *Quarterly personal well-being estimates – non-seasonally adjusted, UK: April to June 2024*. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/quarterlypersonalwellbeingestimatesnonseasonallyadjusted> (Accessed: 29 January 2025).

³ Ministry of Defence (2024). *Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey: 2024*. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66506da2adfc6a4843fe0513/Armed_Forces_Continuous_Attitude_Survey_2024_Main_Report.pdf (Accessed: 29 January 2025).

⁴ Gender, ethnicity, sexuality and age included for 2023. Sex also included for 2024. The change 2023-2024 provided is based upon the change in the average difference in morale for gender, ethnicity, sexuality and age only.

⁵ Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from 0.1%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 84.5% and 84.4% respectively.

POLICE MORALE REMAINS VERY LOW AND IS IN LINE WITH 2023, DRIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS AS WELL AS PAY

- **The personal morale of officers is low and worsening**
 - Only 15 per cent of respondents rate their morale as “high,” “very high,” with 57 per cent reporting morale as “low” or “very low.”
- **Certain roles have especially poor morale**
 - The worst morale is found among those working in road policing, with customer and administrative support also faring poorly.
 - Morale is somewhat better for those in national policing, but even so, only those doing their initial training were more likely to have high morale than low morale.
- **Morale was lower for officers from certain backgrounds**
 - Asian or Asian British officers are more likely to have lower morale, as are those that fall into the mixed or multiple ethnic groups category.
 - Officers who identified as bisexual in the survey reported lower levels of morale than other sexualities.
- **The most significant cause of low morale was how the police are treated by both the public and the government**
 - 93 per cent said that the government’s treatment of the Police hurt their morale, whilst 85 per cent said the same regarding the public.
 - The third most significant factor was pay and benefits, with 77 per cent selecting this
 - 31 per cent said they do not feel proud to be in the Police, same as in 2023.
 - 84 per cent of respondents said that they do not feel respected by the government, which is poor but an improvement on 95 per cent in 2023.
 - 73 per cent of respondents said that they did not feel valued within the Police, up on 71 per cent last year.
- **There is a widespread sense that morale in their force and policing as a whole is low**
 - 88 per cent of respondents feel that morale within the force is currently ‘low’ or ‘very low’, worse by 1% point compared to last year.
 - 92 per cent of respondents feel that morale within the Police service is currently ‘low’ or ‘very low’, also up by 1% point.
- **This low morale has knock on effects onto staff retention**
 - 23 per cent of respondents intend to leave policing either ‘within the next two years’ or ‘as soon as [they] can’, up from 22 per cent in 2023.

- The most common causes for this intention to resign was low morale (86 per cent). The impact of the job on their mental health and how the Police are treated by the government were also important factors (75 per cent and 74 per cent respectively).
- 75 per cent of respondents said that they would not recommend joining the police to others, even higher than the 73 per cent in 2023.

THE IMPACTS OF HIGH INFLATION AND SLOW PAY GROWTH ARE CAUSING DISSATISFACTION AMONGST OFFICERS

- **Three quarters (76%) of officers are unhappy with their basic pay, and 65% are unhappy with their overall remuneration**
 - 76 per cent of respondents said that they are ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with their basic pay, a slight improvement on last year (79 per cent).
 - 82 per cent of officers in London are unhappy with levels of basic pay, with the Midlands second highest on 76 per cent.
 - Constables have higher levels of dissatisfaction with basic pay than other ranks.
 - Dissatisfaction with overall remuneration (including basic pay and allowances) has fallen from 78 per cent to 65 per cent, driven by a fall in dissatisfaction among constables.
- **The perception that officers are not being fairly compensated for the risks of policing has increased in recent years**
 - 85 per cent of respondents feel that they are not fairly paid given the hazards they face within their job, up from 78 per cent in 2018.
 - 91 per cent of respondents feel that they are not fairly paid given the stresses and strains of their job, up from 88 per cent in 2018.
 - The challenges of policing continuously evolve – in 2024, officers faced civil unrest over the summer, during which only 21% felt ‘completely’ or ‘very’ safe and supported.
 - Nearly half of officers (49 per cent) also feel that social media is impacting their ability to do their job
- **Officers are still struggling with the cost of living crisis, with 3 in 10 officers often struggling to cover the monthly essentials**
 - 87 per cent of respondents reported that their cost of living had increased in the last month, with rising food prices cited as a cause by 95 per cent, and rising bills by 92 per cent.

- 15 per cent of respondents reported ‘never’ or ‘almost never’ having enough money to cover all their essentials, down from 18 per cent last year.
- Respondents reported having to change behaviour to adjust to the higher price environment, with 82 per cent spending less on non-essentials and 67 per cent shopping around more.
- **Training and promotion opportunities remain a concern**
 - 40 per cent of respondents reported being ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with opportunities for training and 48 per cent reported being ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with the Professional Development Review (PDR) process.
 - 15 per cent of respondents said that they have applied for promotion to the next rank up from the one they are currently in the last year.
 - When asked why they had not applied for promotion, 53 per cent said it was not worth it for the pressures and the responsibility, and 46 per cent said it was not worth the salary increase.
 - Respondents were specifically asked about applying for detective roles, with just 10 per cent of non-detectives considering becoming one within the next two years.
 - Common reasons for choosing not to become a detective included the perceived workload, a lack of sufficient compensation and a desire to not be stuck in the office.

OFFICERS FACE HEAVY WORKLOADS ALONG WITH UNPREDICTABLE ROTAS, UNPAID OVERTIME AND CANCELLED LEAVE

- **Respondents’ workload is seen as too high, and this is hitting morale**
 - Almost two thirds of officers (63 per cent) described their workload as ‘too high’.
 - 34 per cent of respondents feel that their workload and responsibilities have a positive or neutral impact on their morale, down from 36 per cent in 2022.
 - 86 per cent said that they do not feel that there are enough officers to meet the demands of their team or unit.
 - 32 per cent of respondents ‘always’ or ‘often’ felt pressured into working long hours over the last 12 months.
- **On average, Police are doing 20 hours of overtime across a 4-week period**
 - Respondents did a mean of 6 hours of unpaid overtime over a typical 4-week period, down from 8 hours in 2023.
 - Respondents did a mean of 14 hours of paid overtime over a typical 4-week period, in line with 2023.

- A need to finish work, and a lack of sufficient staff were the most common causes for overtime.
- **A third of respondents are not able to take all their annual leave, and 66 per cent have had rest days cancelled**
 - 83 per cent of officers had had rosters changed due to exigencies of duty, with one in five (20 per cent) having this happen more than 10 times.
 - 7 per cent of respondents said that they have 'never' or 'rarely' been able to take an 11-hour break between shifts in the last 12 months.
 - 36 per cent of respondents said they were unable to take all the annual leave they were entitled to, and 65 per cent have had at least one request for annual leave refused in the past 12 months.
 - 66 per cent had at least one rest days cancelled, up on 63 per cent in 2023.

OFFICERS FACE REGULAR VERBAL AND PHYSICAL ABUSE BUT RECEIVE INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT

- **Injuries from accidents and work-related violence are a risk for officers**
 - 11 per cent of respondents reported that they had suffered one or more injuries that required medical attention as a result of work-related accidents in the last year.
 - 15 per cent of respondents reported that they had suffered one or more injuries that required medical attention as a result of work-related violence in the last year.
- **The physical risks of the job are clear, with 11 per cent also facing unarmed physical attacks on a weekly basis**
 - 11 per cent of respondents have experienced unarmed physical attacks (e.g., struggling to get free, wrestling, hitting, kicking) at least once per week in the past 12 months, the same as last year.
 - 1 per cent of respondents have experienced the use of a deadly weapon at least once per week in the past 12 months.
- **Weekly verbal abuse and threats are commonplace**
 - 34 per cent of respondents have experienced verbal insults (e.g., swearing, shouting, abuse) at least once per week in the past 12 months.
 - 21 per cent of respondents have experienced verbal threats (e.g., threat of hitting, threat of kicking) at least once per week in the past 12 months.
- **Officers are not getting the equipment and procedures that they need, especially when it comes to double crewing**

- Only 27 per cent of respondents reported having access to double crewing ‘at all times’ whilst on duty, compared to 74 per cent who would like to.
- Only 60 per cent of respondents reported having access to spit guards ‘at all times’ whilst on duty, compared to 82 per cent who would like to.

LOW MORALE, COMPENSATION ISSUES, AND TOUGH WORKING CONDITIONS ARE IMPACTING OFFICER WELLBEING

- **Life satisfaction among officers is far below that of the general public**
 - Respondents give an average 5.5 out of 10 rating for their life satisfaction, a slight improvement on 5.2 in 2023.
 - Even so, this is far below that of the general public, who give an average of 7.5, and a tri-forces average in the Armed Forces of 6.1.^{2,3}
- **Officer’s mental health is being harmed by the intensity of the job**
 - 44 per cent of respondents said that they find their job ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ stressful.
 - 81 per cent of respondents indicated that they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months.
 - 93 per cent said that these feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety or other difficulties had been caused, or made worse, by work, with ‘workload being too high’ (60 per cent) and ‘having a poor work/life balance’ (51 per cent) being cited as the most common reasons.
- **Discrimination is also playing a part**
 - People of colour were much more likely to face discrimination at work that has impacted their mental health – 10% of Asian, Asian British, Black or Black British officers or officers from mixed/multiple ethnicities reported this, compared to 5% of White officers.
 - Older officers were also more likely to feel that discrimination during their work had negatively affected their mental health.

THE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROVIDED BY MANAGERS AND FORCES IS OF VARIABLE QUALITY BUT SHOWS SOME PROGRESS

- **Three quarters of officers who are receiving support for their mental health issues tell their managers that they are doing so**
 - Most of those respondents, 75 per cent, who had had mental health challenges told their manager about it, up from 74 per cent in 2022.

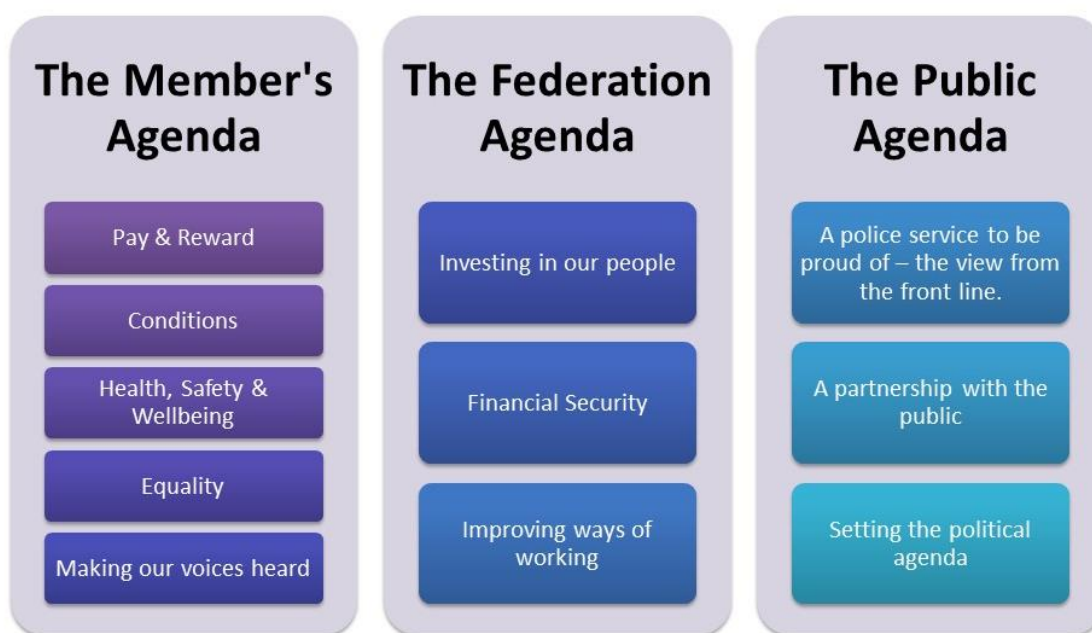
- **However, some officers are still cautious about being open with their manager**
 - 24 per cent of those who didn't tell their manager said that not wanting to be treated differently, in a negative way, held them back.
 - 18 per cent thought that it would impact their opportunities for promotion or specialising.
- **Mental health support quality is mixed in Police forces**
 - 40 per cent rate it 'well' or 'very well', an increase on 38 per cent last year.
 - 32 per cent rate it 'poorly' or 'very poorly', down from 33 per cent.
- **Awareness of reactive mental health support has increased**
 - 80 per cent of officers are aware of reactive mental health support in their force, up from 77 per cent
 - There has not been a shift in awareness of proactive support (46 per cent)

INTRODUCTION

The PFEW Pay and Morale Survey, conducted every year since 2014, gathers officers' views on their pay, conditions, attitudes to their work and the Police service more broadly. To the best of our knowledge, it is the largest annual survey of police officers in the UK.

This survey is the richest source of data on the state of policing in the country, and serves as a critical tool for tracking progress against the PFEW2025 strategy, summarised in Figure 1. As with the 2023 report, this 2024 report will be structured around the Members' Agenda section of the PFEW2025 strategy. The Members' Agenda, which focuses on the well being of police officers, has several goals: a) Pay & Reward - campaign to achieve fair pay increases to achieve the best possible outcomes for members; b) Conditions - secure the best possible terms & conditions of working; c) Health, Safety & Wellbeing - a safe and healthy working environment, with access to first-class welfare provisions; d) Equality - lead the way to deliver an inclusive workplace; and e) Making our voices heard - position ourselves as the undisputed voice of policing.

Figure 1: PFEW2025 high level summary



This year, PFEW are once again presenting the analysis and results in partnership with the Social Market Foundation (SMF). SMF are Britain's leading cross-party think-tank. They conduct research and run events looking at a wide range of economic and social policy areas, focusing on economic prosperity, public services and consumer markets. The SMF

maintains strict independence, with a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives represented across its staff, trustees, and advisory board. By collaborating with the SMF, PFEW incorporates an external and objective viewpoint into the analysis of the Pay and Morale Survey results.

As in previous years, this report continues to highlight key insights into respondents' morale, perceptions of the cost of living, and attitudes toward pay and benefits. It also examines respondents' intentions to remain in the Police service and their engagement levels—such as feelings of pride in the profession and willingness to recommend the Police service to others. Additionally, the report delves into respondents' views on working arrangements, workloads, staffing levels, and hours, alongside their physical and mental health and overall wellbeing. New for this year, the report contains sections looking at things topical to 2024, including the impact of social media and the response to the unrest over the summer. There is also additional analysis on officers' motivations to become a detective, and officers who are carers.

RESPONDENTS AND RESPONSE RATE

The PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2024 launched on 16th September 2024 and closed on 28th October 2024. During that time, we had responses from 36,187 officers. After data cleansing, we had 35,092 responses. The response rate for the Pay and Morale Survey 2024 was therefore approximately 24 per cent of all federated rank officers in England and Wales.⁶

REPRESENTATIVENESS

To calculate whether the sample size is representative, it is necessary to take the population size into account, along with the margin of error and the confidence level. In essence, the margin of error measures the maximum amount by which the results from the sample are expected to differ from those of the actual population and is calculated using the sample size (the number of responses from federated rank officers in England and Wales), the population size (the total number of federated rank officers in England and Wales) and the confidence level.

The smaller the margin of error, the more confident we can be that the results are representative of the overall sample. For example: If 60 per cent of respondents answered

⁶ Home Office. (2024). *Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2024: data tables* [Dataset]. Available at: [Police workforce open data tables - GOV.UK](#) (Accessed at: 12 January 2025).

‘Yes’ to one of the survey questions and the margin of error is 5 per cent, we can estimate that 55 per cent - 65 per cent of the whole population would answer the same if asked.

If the margin of error is less than 5 per cent, it can be considered to be within the normal bounds of academic rigour. The margin of error for this report has been calculated, and at a 95 per cent confidence level, this report has a margin of error of less than 1 per cent.

To ensure that each force is proportionally represented within the national sample, data was weighted on the basis of respondents’ force.⁷ This is standard practice in survey reporting, and is used by industry leaders, and in government survey reporting such as the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (run by the Ministry of Defence). More information on weighting and representativeness can be found within the Technical Annex.

This year, 31 per cent of respondents to the survey were female, 69 per cent were male⁸, and the average (mean) age of respondents was 40 years. The majority of respondents were Constables (73 per cent) with 19 per cent of respondents at the rank of Sergeant, 7 per cent at the rank of Inspector and 2 per cent at the rank of Chief Inspector. This is broadly representative of the federated rank population as a whole. Again, further details on demographics can be found within the 2024 Pay and Morale Technical Annex.

AVERAGES AND ROUNDING

The “average” can refer to one of three statistics: The mean is the numeric average calculated by adding all the data points together and dividing by the number of data points. Examples a) $10+10+10+10+20+30 / 6 = 15$ - the mean is 15. b) $10+20+30=60$, then $60 / 4 = 15$. The mode is whatever data point is most often found within the data set Examples a) 10, 10, 10, 10, 20, 30 - the mode is 10. b) 10, 20, 30 – there is no mode. The median is calculated by setting out the numbers in ascending order, and finding the number that separates the top half, from the bottom half Examples a) 10, 10, 10, 10, 20, 30, the median is 10. b) 10, 20, 30 the median is 20.

Please note that this year, we have moved towards presenting the mean as the standard average, as this is more widely used and understood.

⁷ The weighting for each force was calculated by dividing the number of federated rank officers in the force relative to the federated rank population in England and Wales as a whole by the number of responses received from officers within the force relative to the sample as a whole.

⁸ Please note that the 69/31 split is the same whether looking at sex or gender.

Also note that numbers are rounded based upon 1 decimal point, such that 24.5 rounds to 25, because of the data analytics tool used. This means that 24.47 would be 24.5 to 1 decimal point, and would therefore be rounded up to 25, rather than down to 24.

MORALE

Table 2: Morale KPIs

Table 2	Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Morale	% who say 'own morale' is low	58%	57%	0%pt ⁹	Well over half of officers having low morale, although a marginal improvement from '23
> Overall	% who say 'force morale' is low	87%	88%	0%pt ¹⁰	Nearly nine in ten officers think force morale is low
> Retention	% intending to leave within 2 years	22%	23%	1%pt	The proportion intending to leave policing has worsened slightly, hinting at staff retention problems

Most of the chapters in this report are structured around the subcategories in the Member's Agenda within the PFEW2025 strategy. Although morale is not its own subcategory, it is a cross-cutting issue that is impacted by low pay, unfavourable terms and conditions, poor health & safety, inequality, or a failure to be listened to.

The brief improvement in morale during the pandemic (9% fall in low morale) was quickly reversed. As Table 2 shows, there has been little change to officer morale between 2023 and 2024 – it remains very low. This is driving significant numbers to consider leaving policing.

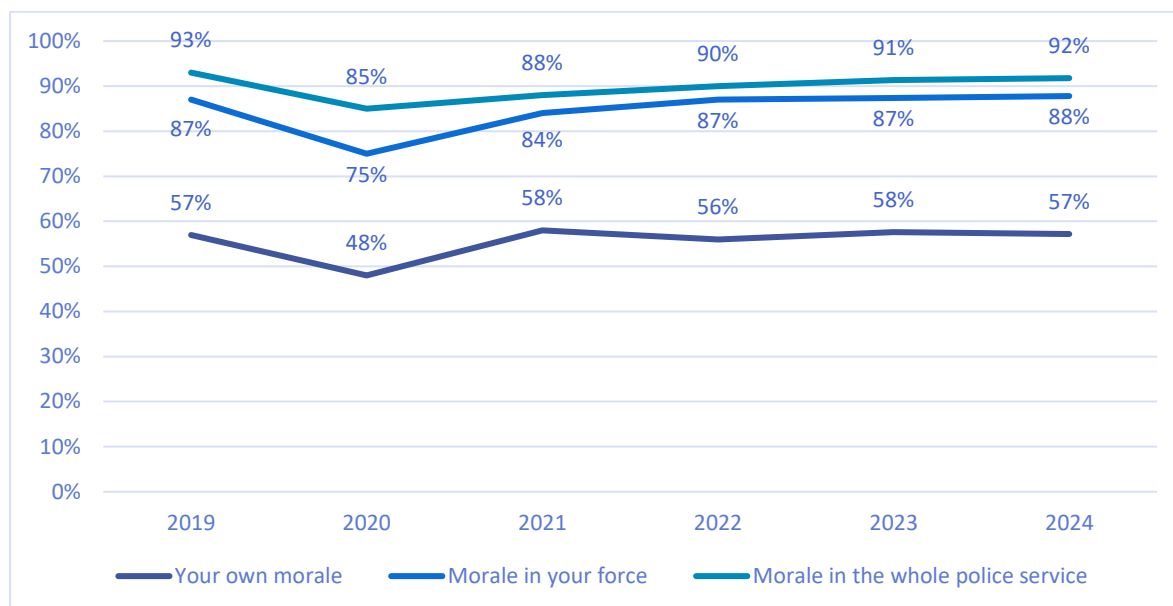
This section of the report covers officers' level of morale, as well as how they see morale more widely in their force and the Police service. It then looks at staff retention issues in policing, and what are the factors driving these decisions.

⁹ Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from -0.4%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 57.6% and 57.2% respectively.

¹⁰ Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from 0.4%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 87.4% and 87.8% respectively.

OVERALL MORALE

Figure 2: Respondents' morale since 2019



Morale has been consistently low in recent years. Most officer's personal morale is low (57%) and their perception of morale more widely is even worse. Around nine in ten think that morale in their force (88%) and the police service as a whole (92%) is low.

Levels of personal morale vary across roles, but it is only among officers completing their initial training that a majority have high morale, as Figure 3 shows. For those in every other role, there are far more people with low morale than high morale.

The worst morale is found in road policing. Two thirds (65%) have low personal morale, with just 11% having high morale. Customer and administrative support are other areas where morale is especially bad.

Morale is relatively good in national policing, but even there, only 26% of officers have high morale compared to 45% with low morale. The training department, other functions and criminal justice are some of the few roles where rates of low morale are slightly better.

Figure 3: Respondents' personal morale by role

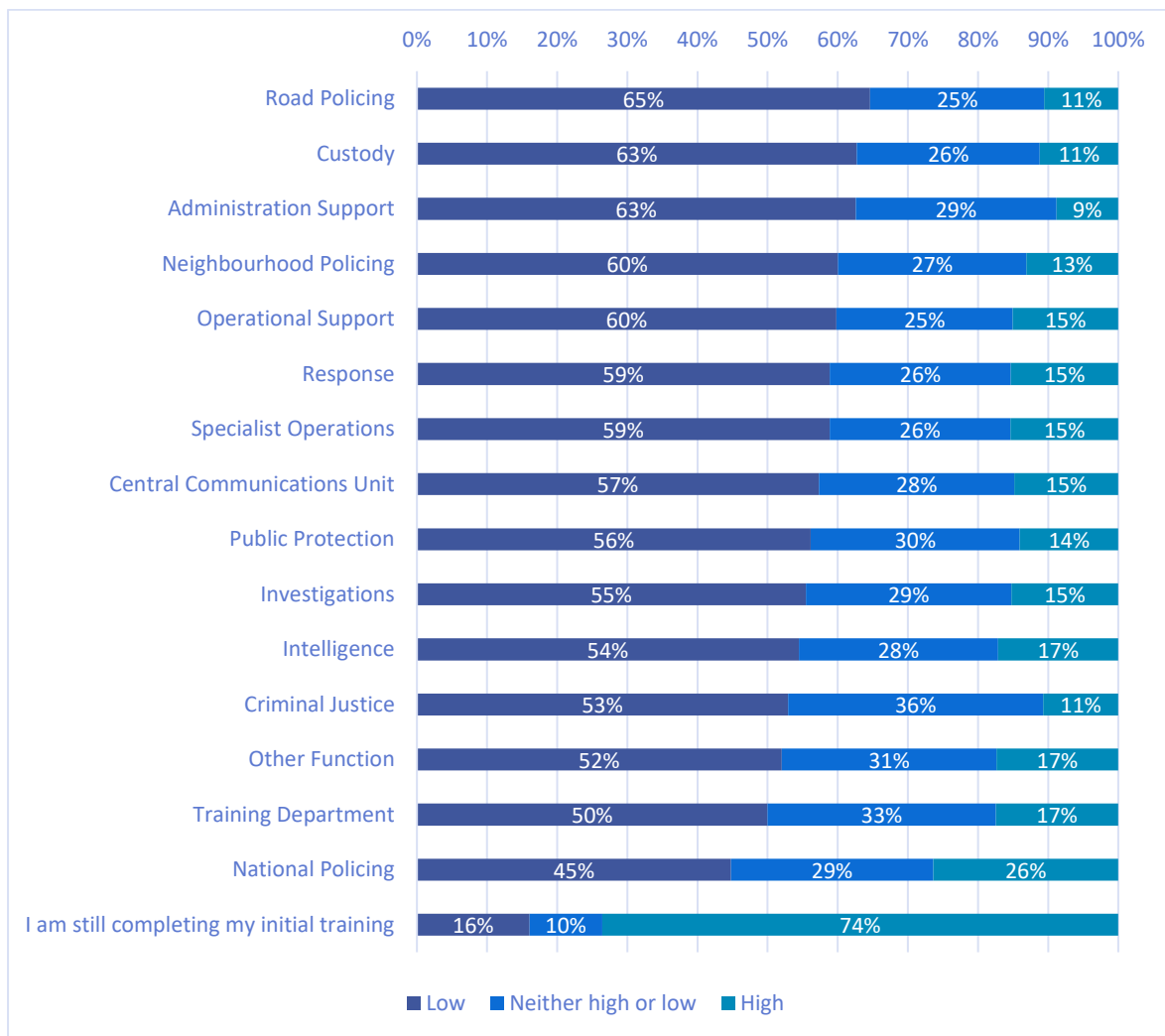


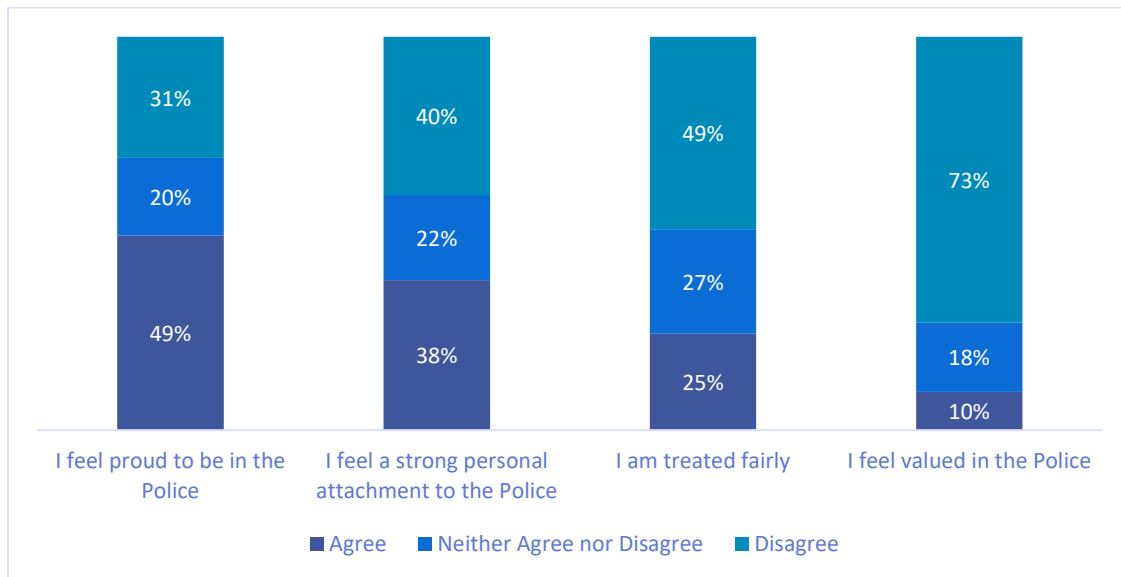
Table 3 outlines the major drivers of low officer morale. The most cited reason is the government's treatment of the police, with 93% of respondents saying that this has a negative or very negative impact on their morale. The second most widely cited negative factor is how the public treats the police (85% negative/very negative), with pay and benefits as the third worst factor (77% negative/very negative).

Table 3: Impact of factors on morale

Factors on Morale	Negative or very negative	Neither negative nor positive	Positive or very positive
How police are treated by government	93%	5%	1%
How police are treated by public	85%	12%	2%
Pay and benefits	77%	13%	9%
Pension	66%	21%	12%
Workload and responsibilities	66%	24%	10%
Work life balance	61%	23%	16%
Opportunities for training/development	42%	44%	14%

In 2022, 58% of officers felt ‘proud to be in the Police’ but that dropped to 51% in 2023 and then to 49% this year. Figure 4 shows this alongside some other statements that officers were asked to respond to relating to how they felt about policing. Two in five feel a strong personal attachment to the Police, against a similar share who do not. Only a quarter of officers feel that they are treated fairly in the force, with just one in ten feeling valued.

Figure 4: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following



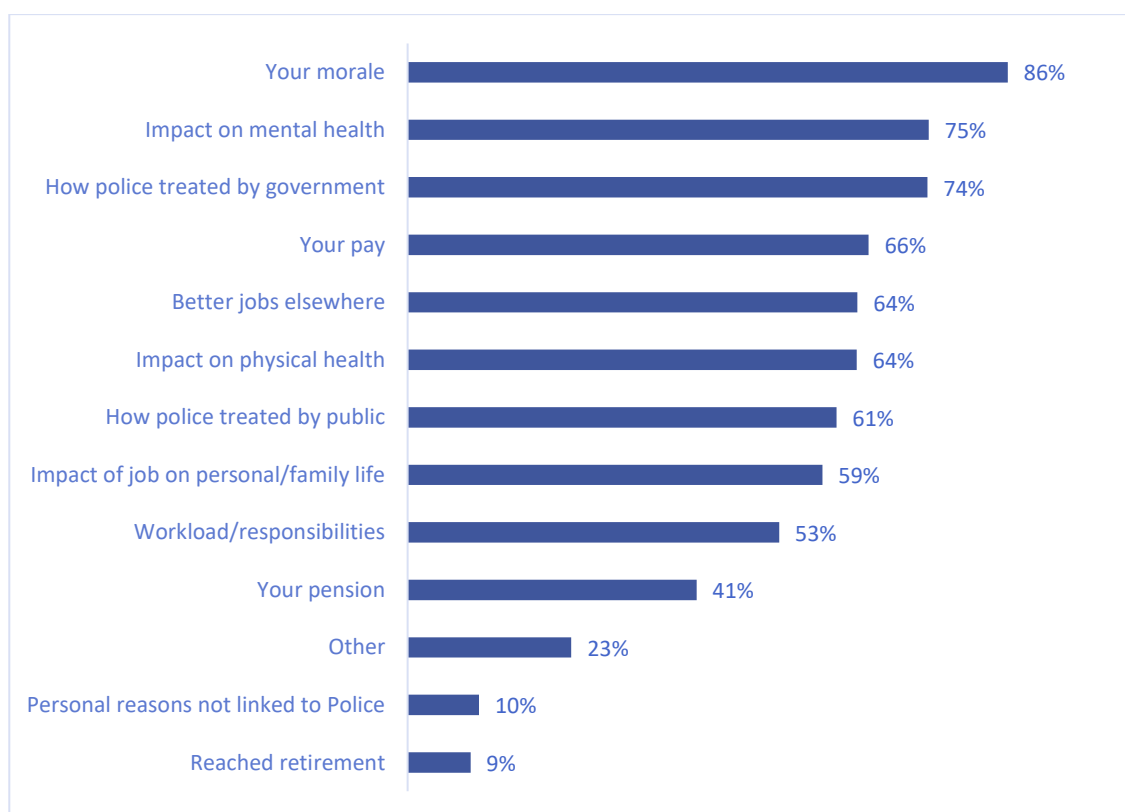
RETENTION

Such low levels of morale would be expected to have an impact upon the Police force's ability to attract and retain staff. Just 10% of respondents would 'recommend joining the Police to others. Three quarters (75%) would not.

The share who are either actively looking for work or planning on resigning within the next 2 years has also edged up slightly from 22% in 2023 to 23% this year. However, a majority of officers (57%) are still planning on staying in policing until retirement with a further 19% planning on staying for at least 2 more years.

Officers who are planning on leaving the force within the next two years were asked to consider the impact of different factors on their intentions, as shown in Figure 5. Low morale is by far the most significant cause, with 86% saying that this was a major factor. The impact on mental health was critical for three quarters of officers (75%), as was the treatment of the police by the government (74%).

Figure 5: Factors which have a major impact on respondents' intention to leave the police service



Reasons for intending to leave policing

"We are just an awful place to work"

Officer

"The uncertainty of my role, the day to day not knowing if i will suddenly be put in a role I don't want to do"

Officer

"The state of Policing overall now. It's no longer something to be proud of, and the most positive day at work will always be overshadowed by the next farce or mock outrage at a Policing incident in the media."

Officer

"The current state of policing. Everything is a priority to the detriment of the front line. We are so focused upon targets that it is having a significant impact upon morale. Instead of addressing the issues we are pushing it all onto the front line"

Officer

"I always wanted to stay until I reached the age of 60. This has changed for myself as the demands, duty changes and lack of Police Officers is the main drive to leave the force. I am already arranging interviews, with a wage below what I am able to earn in the Police, so that I can get out of this and have a normal routine..."

Officer

PAY AND REWARD

Table 4: Pay and reward KPIs

Table 4		Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Pay & Reward		% dissatisfied with 'overall remuneration'	78%	65%	-13%pt	In line with previous years, the majority of officers are dissatisfied with pay, although improvement on last year
>	View on Pay	Impact of pay on intention to leave (% leave)	51%	51%	0%pt	Just over half of officers say pay is causing them to think of leaving policing
>	View on Pension	% dissatisfied with pension	63%	75%	11%pt	Sharp increase in dissatisfaction with pensions, taking it to highest level in at least a decade
>	Impact of Cost of Living Crisis	% who never or occasionally have enough money to cover all monthly expenses	36%	32%	-5%pt	Signs that the cost of living crisis is abating somewhat, although nearly a third of officers are still struggling to make ends meet
>	Promotions, Training & Development	% dissatisfied with their promotion prospects	36%	37%	1%pt	Over a third of officers are unhappy with their promotion prospects, with a slight increase on last year

This section focuses on the pay and remuneration elements of the PFEW2025 strategy. There has been a divergence in officers' happiness with their overall remuneration and the sub-elements of their incomes. Although dissatisfaction with overall remuneration, i.e. including allowances, is lower than it has been since 2015, there has been little change in how officers feel about their basic pay, and a jump in unhappiness about pensions. The cost of living crisis is still biting, albeit to a less acute level than in 2022 and 2023.

Actions on Pay and Reward from PFEW2025 Strategy

- We will campaign to achieve pay increases that are fair. We will press Chief Officers and PCCs to back us after all they are the employer. We will press MPs to join our campaign. We recognise this is challenging, but that will not diminish our ambition.
- We will provide information on the choices of which pension scheme benefits (Final Salary or CARE) members wish to receive for the period 1 April 2015 31 March 2022.

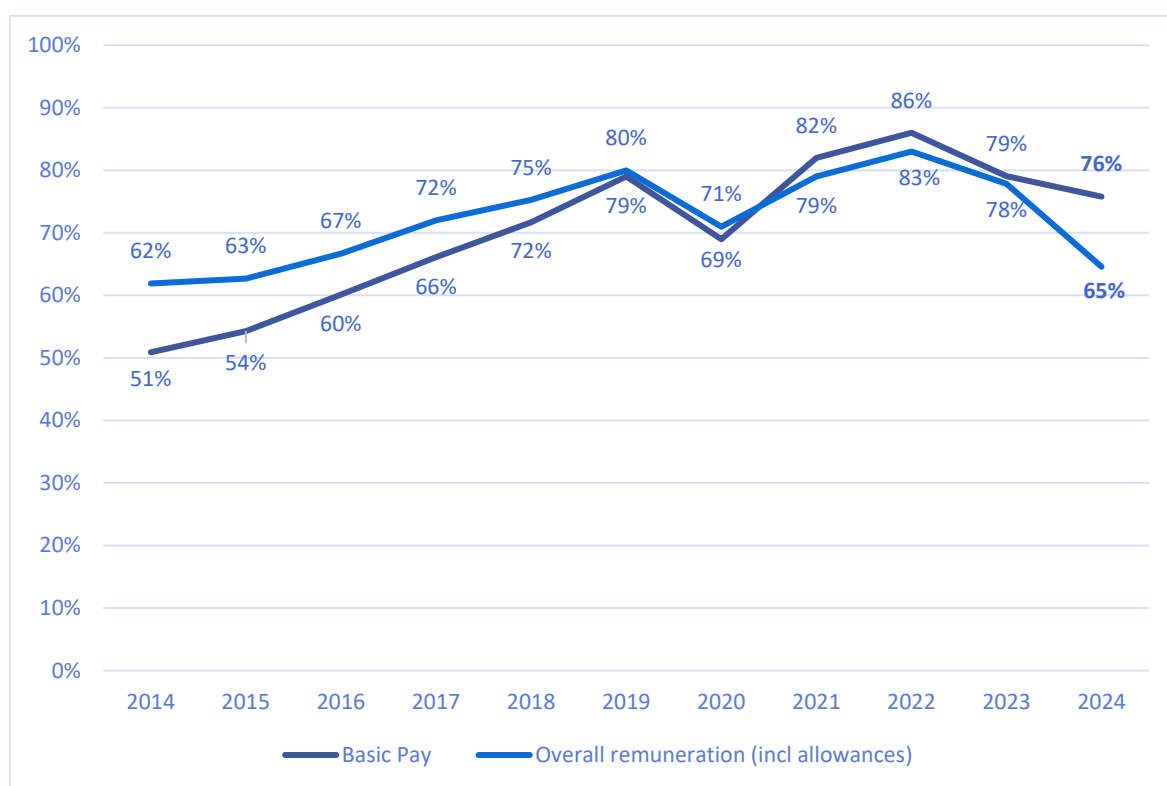
- *We will press Chief Officers to use the full range of Regulations available to them where these would allow improvements to members' pay. Where we see fresh opportunities to add new Regulations that will benefit Members we will press the case.*

The results of the survey relating to pay and remuneration are presented across 5 subsections. The first section examines how officers feel about their pay and how it influences their likelihood of staying in policing. It will also look at how the force feels about which unique aspects of policing should be better reflected through a 'P-Factor'. The next subsection focuses on pensions. The third reveals how the cost of living crisis is continuing to impact officers and their families. The fourth presents data on how respondents feel about the promotion process and their prospects. The final subsections goes through a range of allowances, asking how those who receive them feel about their adequacy.

VIEW ON PAY

The vast majority of officers are dissatisfied with their pay. Three quarters (76%) were unhappy with their basic pay, and two-thirds (65%) dissatisfied with their overall remuneration package. These are both an improvement on 2023. The level indicating dissatisfaction with basic pay fell from 79% to 76%, meanwhile there was a substantial 13% point fall regarding overall remuneration, taking it to its lowest level since 2015. The gap in dissatisfaction between basic pay and overall remuneration is as large as it has been since 2014, at 11% points. Dissatisfaction with allowances has hardly changed since last year (70% in 2023 vs 69% in 2024) so further investigation is required to understand what has driven this divergence.

Figure 6: Share of members dissatisfied with basic pay and overall remuneration



The level of dissatisfaction with overall remuneration was very similar across ranks in 2023. 79% of constables were unhappy, compared to 76% of sergeants and those in inspecting ranks. The fall in dissatisfaction in 2024 has been driven entirely by constables – 60% are now dissatisfied, down from 79% in 2023, with 18% satisfied, an increase on 7% last year. Sergeants are as dissatisfied as in 2023, whilst the inspecting ranks are less happy (79% vs 76% in 2023). Clearly, having 3 in 5 constables unhappy with their overall remuneration is still a poor position, but it is interesting to note the change year on year. Younger officers

(18-24) and those with shorter service lengths are less likely to be dissatisfied. One possible explanation for the fall in dissatisfaction among constables and newer officers is that they have benefited from both the force-wide 4.75% pay increase, and the chance to move up increments within their pay grade. Meanwhile, longer standing officers who are at the top of their pay grade would only see their pay grow at the force's rate.

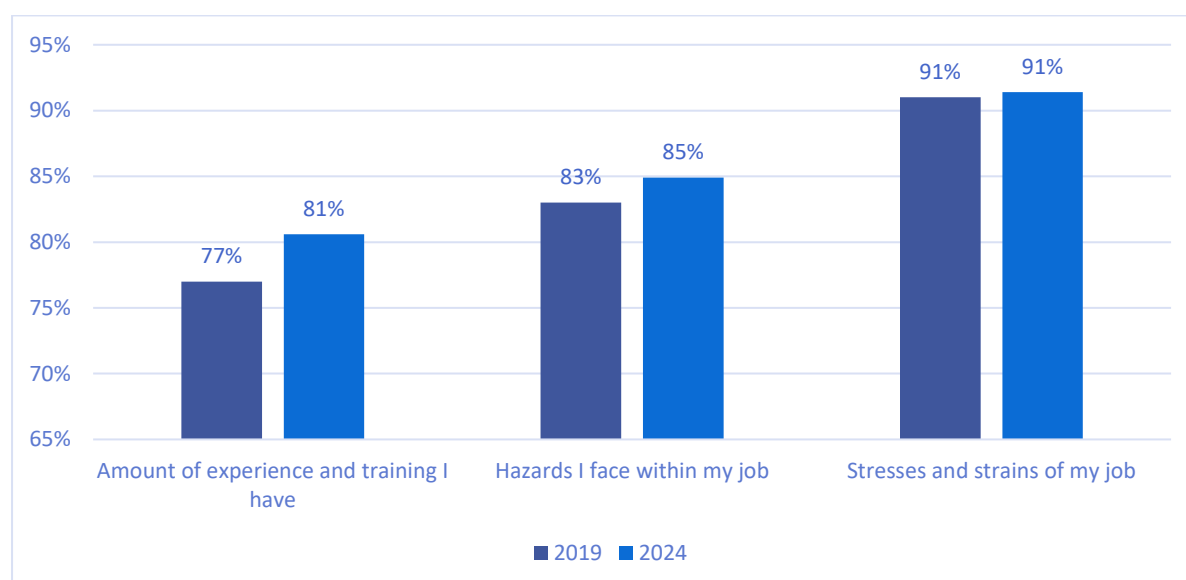
This change, however, is not reflected in the components of 'overall remuneration'. When asked about basic pay, for example, dissatisfaction has fallen by 3% points across each rank. More constables are dissatisfied with their basic pay (78%) than are sergeants (71%) or those in inspecting ranks (67%).

THE 'P-FACTOR'

Military personnel receive an 'X Factor', which is applied on top of their basic pay to reflect the physical, psychological and other risks inherent to their role. PFEW have been arguing that a 'P-factor' should be recognised as part of police pay given the distinctive nature of the role and the hazards faced. PFEW have worked with Professor Turnbull of the University of Bristol to further explore the issues surrounding the P-Factor.

Respondents overwhelmingly do not feel like police pay is currently fair considering various aspects of the role, as Figure 7 shows. Significant majorities of officers do not feel like their incomes properly take account of the stresses of the role (91%), its hazards (85%) and the level of training required to carry it out (81%). These views have strengthened since 2019. The survey also asked whether police officers felt like they were paid fairly compared to other key workers – 70% disagreed.

Figure 7: I am not fairly paid considering the...



Officers were asked to choose one aspect of police pay from a list of options that they thought should be considered when pay is being reviewed. Over a quarter of officers (27%) pointed to the psychological trauma that can be part of the role. The next most popular option (17%) was the legal risk and accountability that policing entails.

Figure 8: What unique aspects of policing should be considered when police pay is being reviewed? (choose one)



These high levels of unhappiness with police pay, and its ability to compensate officers for the risks of the role, are hitting morale. Three quarters (77%) say pay is having a negative impact on their morale – a slight improvement on 2023 (81%) although still a very high rate.

There can be knock on effects on staff retention too. Half (51%) of respondents say that pay is making them increasingly likely to think about leaving the Police force.

Unique Aspects of Policing

"It is such a unique role with mental, physical danger and no ability or outlet to take industrial action. No other job cancels days off and refuses holiday for court warnings which are then either announced or cancelled last minute. All officers know what they are getting in to but all officers would like recognition of the fact they put up with these inconveniences."

Officer

"...this is a very particular job that has a huge impact on your personal life and interrupts all factors of daily life. If we want people to stay and feel passionate and proud of the job they do, they need to feel like the state appreciates their plentiful sacrifices and key to this in money. Officers at all ranks should feel financially comfortable and they currently definitely do not"

Officer

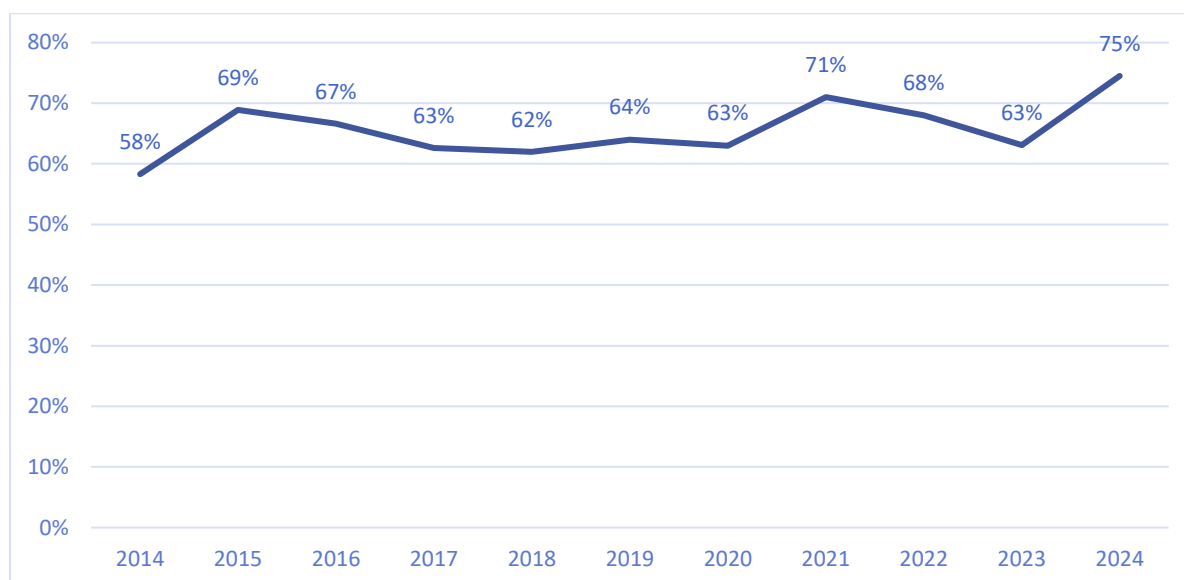
"You are never "off duty" it is 24/7 with a lot of expectation. You have to vet your friends and family and ensure the job know about any history. It is not a job, it is a lifestyle. You have to be 100% in."

Officer

VIEW ON PENSIONS

Police officers are more unhappy with the situation around police pensions than they have been in at least a decade. Dissatisfaction spiked since 2023, from 63% up to 75% this year. This is far above the levels seen in 2014 (58%).

Figure 9: Share of members dissatisfied with their pension



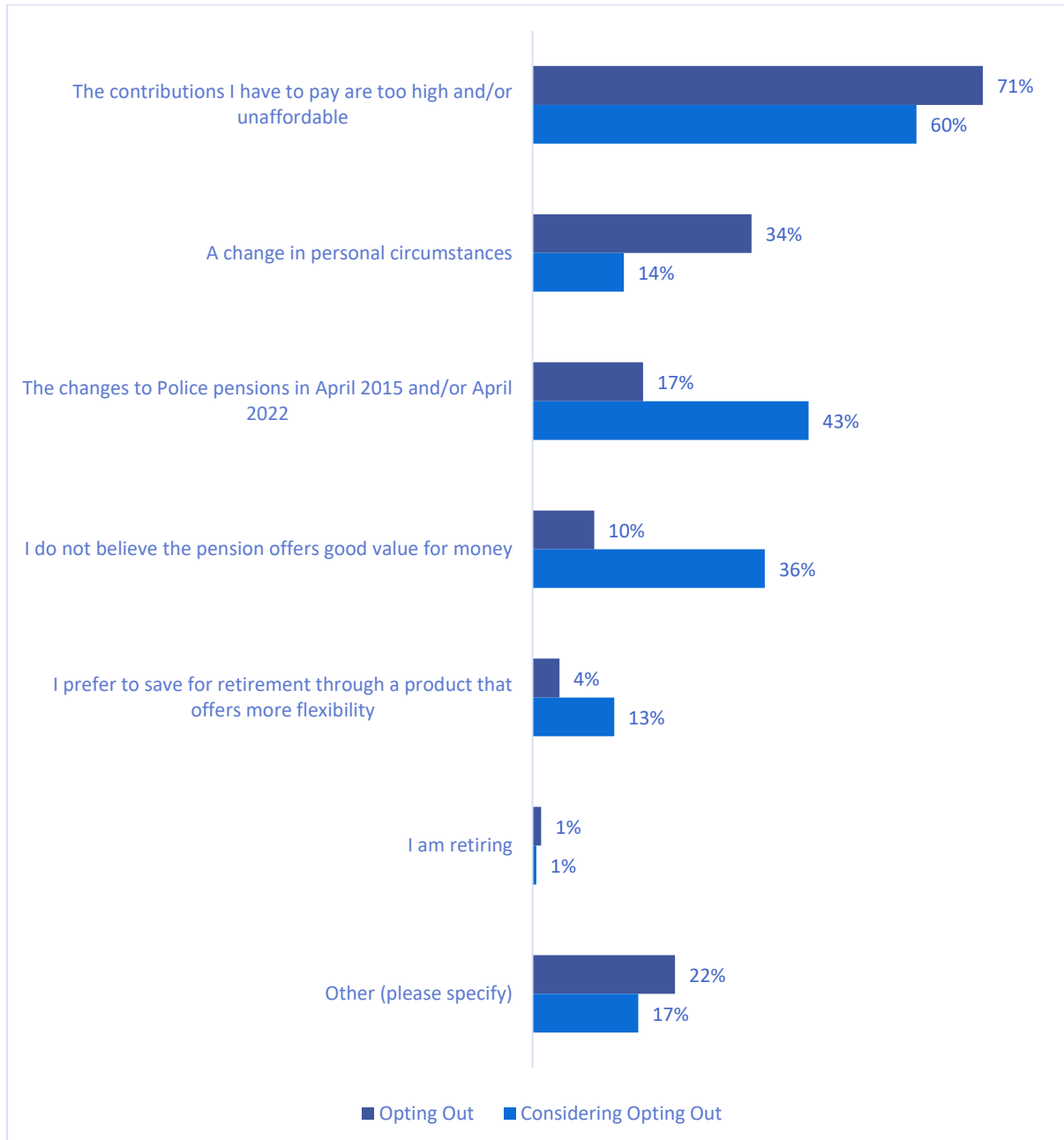
Despite officers' problems with the pension, it still encourages more officers to stay in the Police service than encourages them to leave it. Some 40 per cent of respondents say it increases their intention to remain, against 21 per cent who say it increases their intention to leave. But it is difficult to discern whether this is due to the existence of the pension itself, or due to the levels of pension contributions.

Members are on different types of pension scheme depending on when they joined the force. The largest group is the 39% who were on the Police Pension Scheme (PPC) 1987 but are now on the 2015 CARE scheme. Around one in five (22%) were in the New Police Pension Scheme (NPPC) 2006 before migrating to the CARE scheme, whilst 34% have only ever been on CARE.

Worryingly, 7% of respondents have opted out of the police pension scheme. On top of this, 15% are thinking of doing so. The most common reasons are shown in Figure 10, which highlights that the level of pension contributions being too high is the primary factor for those who have opted out, and who are thinking about doing so. A 'change in personal circumstances' is more important for those who have actually opted out (34%) than for those considering opting out (14%). For officers thinking of leaving the scheme, changes to

the pension since 2015 and a sense that the pension does not offer good value for money are important factors too.

Figure 10: What are the main reasons for opting out/considering opting out of the pension scheme?



Reason For Leaving Pension Scheme

"Cost of living so high I would rather cover bills instead. I will be opting back in when pay scale increases to make it affordable"

Officer

"All I hear from longer service Officers is that we have been let down by the new pension scheme"

Officer

"Concern that the government will change the conditions again - so what's the point if they can change it - paying in a substantial amount to receive less"

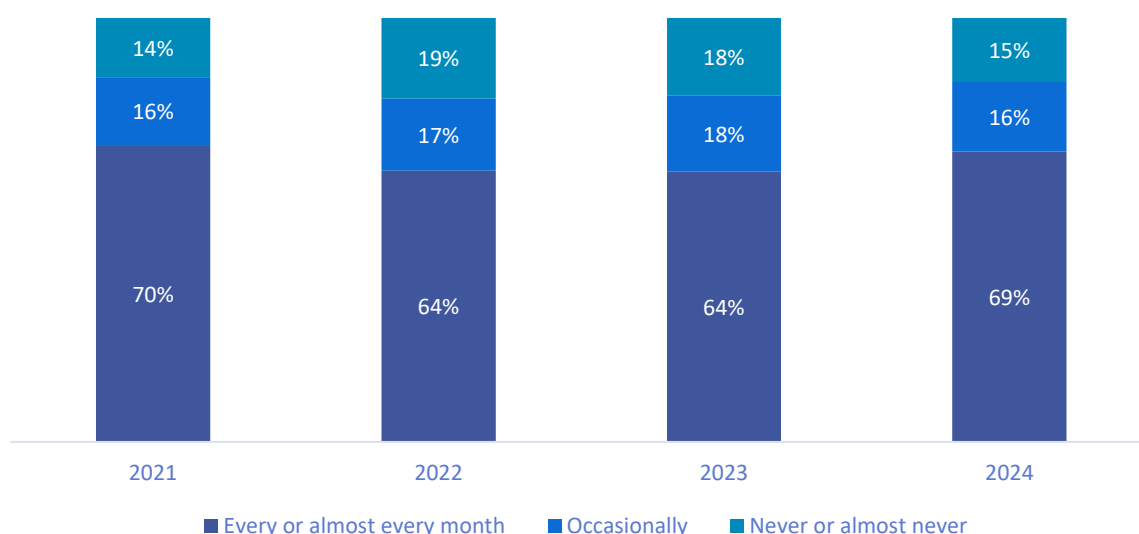
Officer

IMPACT OF COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Although inflation has recently been decreasing, the effects of an extended period of time with high inflation and the 2022-23 price spike is still be felt. Nearly all members (87%) said that their cost of living had increased over the past month. Four out of five officers (79%) feel worse off than they did 5 years ago, a slight improvement on 2023 (85%).

Three in ten PFEW members (31%) are struggling to cover their monthly essentials, with 15% of respondents 'never' or 'almost never' being able to. These figures are in line with 2021, with them having worsened in 2022 and 2023. This is flowing through to officers' state of wellbeing – over half (52%) are worrying about money every day.

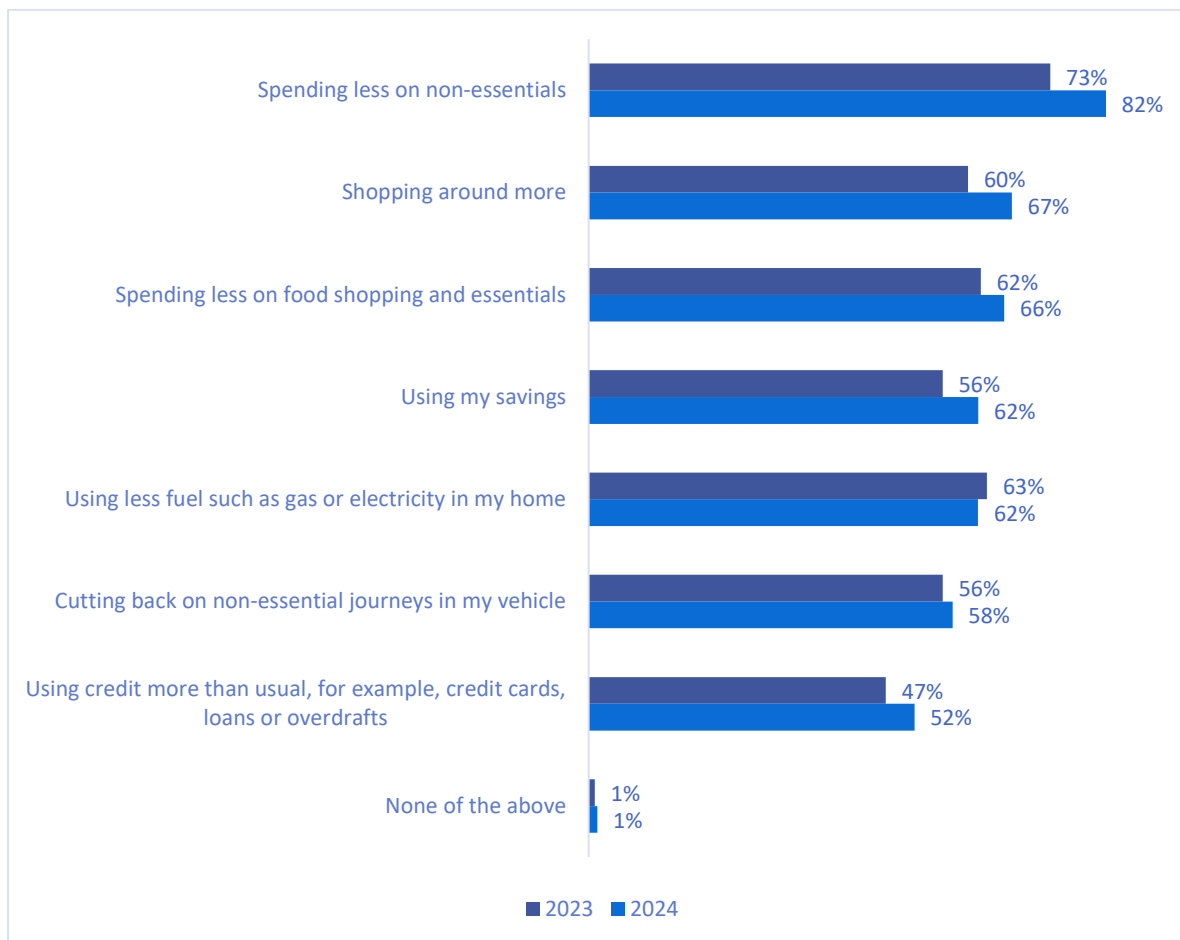
Figure 11: I am able to cover my monthly essentials...



Food prices and utility bills are the main culprits for rising prices, with 95% and 92% of officers citing them as a reason. 72% said that their fuel spending had increased, and over half (55%) had found their rents or mortgage costs going up.

Although prices are rising more slowly, members are increasingly having to change their behaviours to cut costs. Over four in five (82%) are finding themselves spending less on non-essentials, up from 73% in 2023. Two-thirds (67%) are shopping around more, compared to 60% last year. Some officers (13%) have had to seek financial support to help them cover day-to-day expenses. This shows that, although headline rates of inflation are lower than they were last year, households are still suffering from the cost of living crisis.

Figure 12: Which of the following are you doing because your cost of living has increased?



Impact Of Cost Of Living Crisis

"All essentials have increased in price, lower than expected pay rise"

Officer

"[I] Can't afford to rent, [I am] staying at friends"

Officer

"Dare I say it (because who am I to want something over basic living costs which is a struggle at the best of times), if I want days out with my family (costs other than working and living and actually doing something together) have increased so much that I rely on overtime for both basic monthly expenses and for anything over this for leisure"

Officer

"Quite literally everything is more expensive. I am also now a single income household and barely able to survive."

Officer

How Officers Are Dealing With Cost Of Living Crisis

"Borrowing every single month from family"

Officer

"Buying second hand clothes & furniture. It's a disgrace"

Officer

"Cutting down on visiting stations as part of my role as have to use own fuel and wear and tear on vehicle and fuel allowances only just cover it and has to initially come out of my own pocket."

Officer

"I actively skip meals to feed my family. We also go to the local school where they provide surplus food. They don't refer to it as a food bank, but it is similar."

Officer

PROMOTIONS, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the survey, respondents were asked to reflect on a number of aspects of promotions and personal development within policing. Around four in ten (39%) were unhappy with their opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD). Over a third of officers (37%) were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their promotion prospects. There has been little change since last year.

About nine in ten officers (89%) are aware of their force having a Professional Development Review (PDR) process, but its quality was challenged by around half of officers – 48% were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with it.

Failure to provide officers with strong promotion pathways, training and development has wider impacts on their happiness – 42% say that it has had a 'negative' or 'very negative' impact on their morale.

Table 5: Training and development

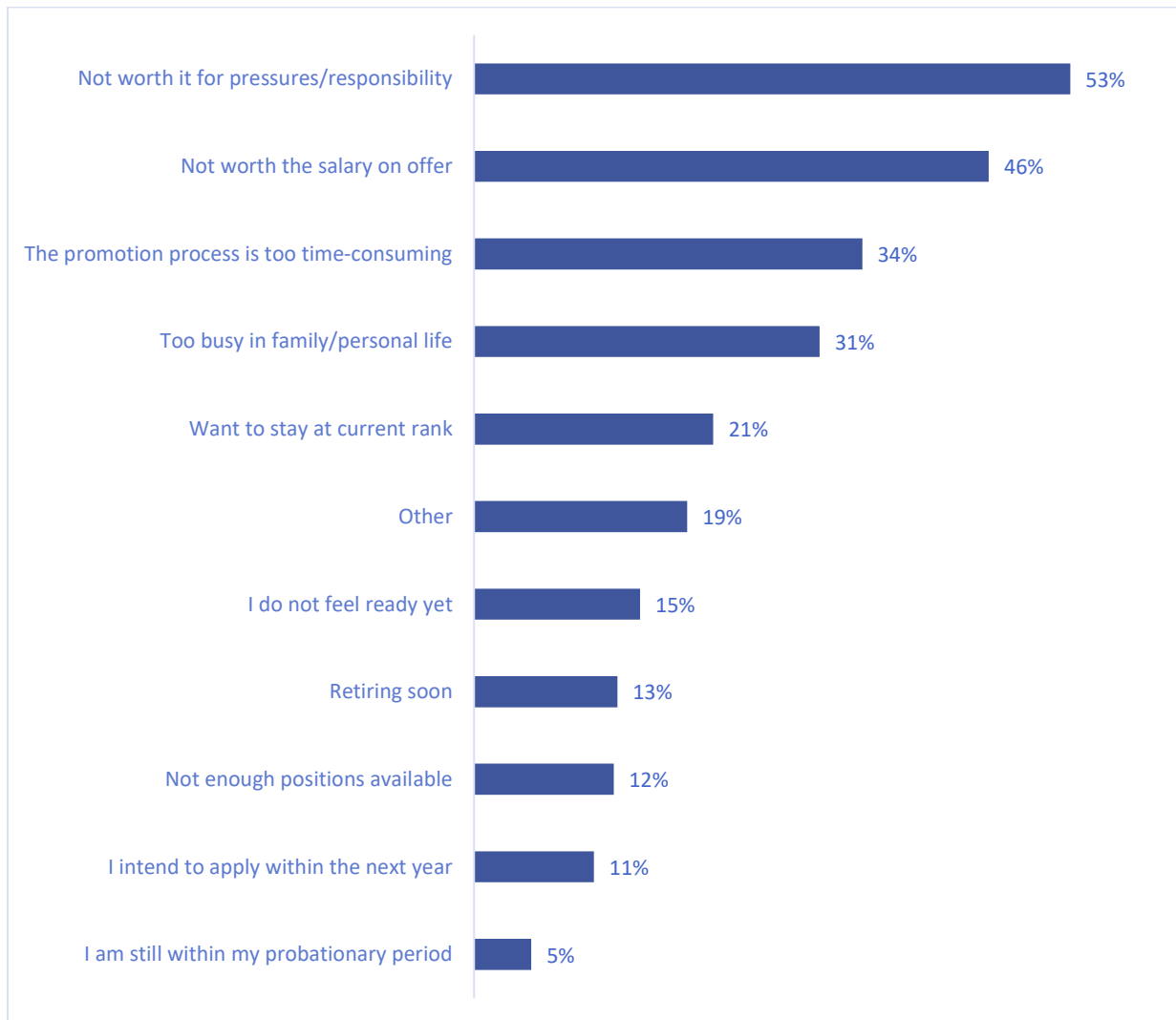
Training and Development	Proportion of respondents who are 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with...	
	2023	2024
Professional Development Review (PDR) process	48%	48%
Their opportunities for training	40%	40%
The training they are given	41%	39%
Their opportunities for continuous professional development	38%	39%
Their promotion prospects	36%	37%

Over the last year, 15% of respondents were involved in the promotion process. Within that, 2% were successful in getting promoted and 6% were not. A further 7% of all respondents were in the midst of completing the promotion process whilst the survey was conducted.

The 85% who had not engaged with the promotion process were asked why they did not apply. The most common reason (53%) was respondents feeling that promotion was not worth the additional pressures and responsibility. Nearly half (46%) said that it was not worth

the salary on offer. The third most common reason, selected by 34%, was that the promotion process itself was a barrier, with it being 'too time-consuming'.

Figure 13: What are your main reasons for not applying for promotion?



Reasons For Not Applying For Promotion

"A biased system that knows the people it wants, and the people it doesn't"

Officer

"Examination process- Due to the Constabulary still employing the archaic process of examinations, this puts off a number of people with additional needs that may well thrive in the role but find examinations daunting even with extra time."

Officer

"Do not want the stress and impact this would have on work/life balance"

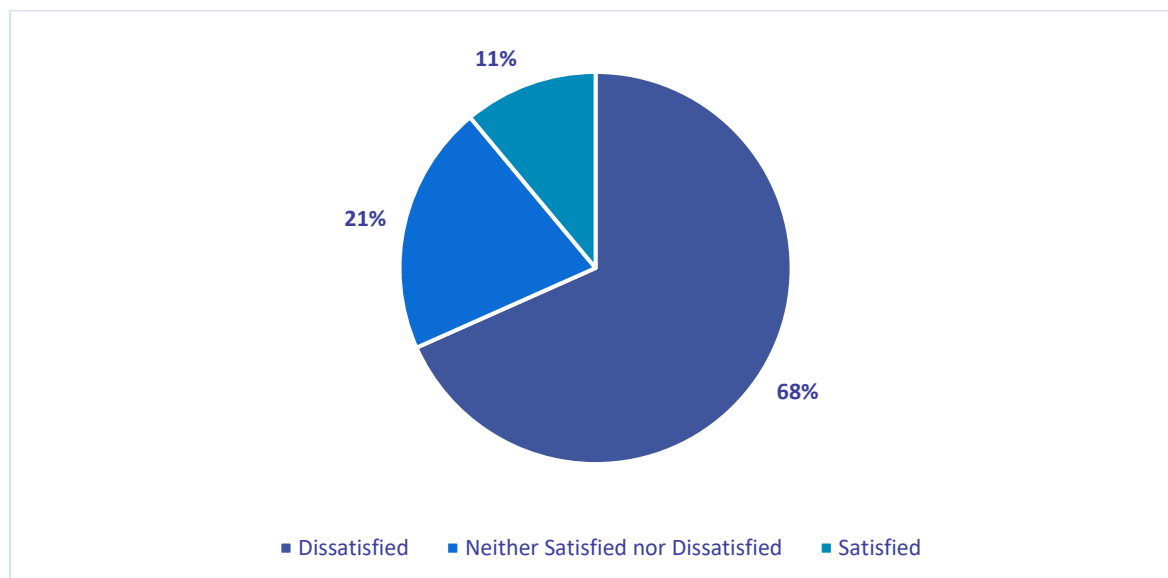
Officer

SPECIFIC PAYMENTS AND ROLES

REGIONAL ALLOWANCES

Around four in ten Police officers (39%) work in London and the South East. They are entitled to a regional allowance in recognition of the additional cost of living in this part of England.

Figure 14: How satisfied are you with the amount of your London or South East Allowance?



Those respondents who were receiving the London or South East allowance were asked for their view on the amount. Most were dissatisfied, compared to just 11% who were happy with it. Members are slightly more dissatisfied than last year (66% in 2023 vs 68% this year).

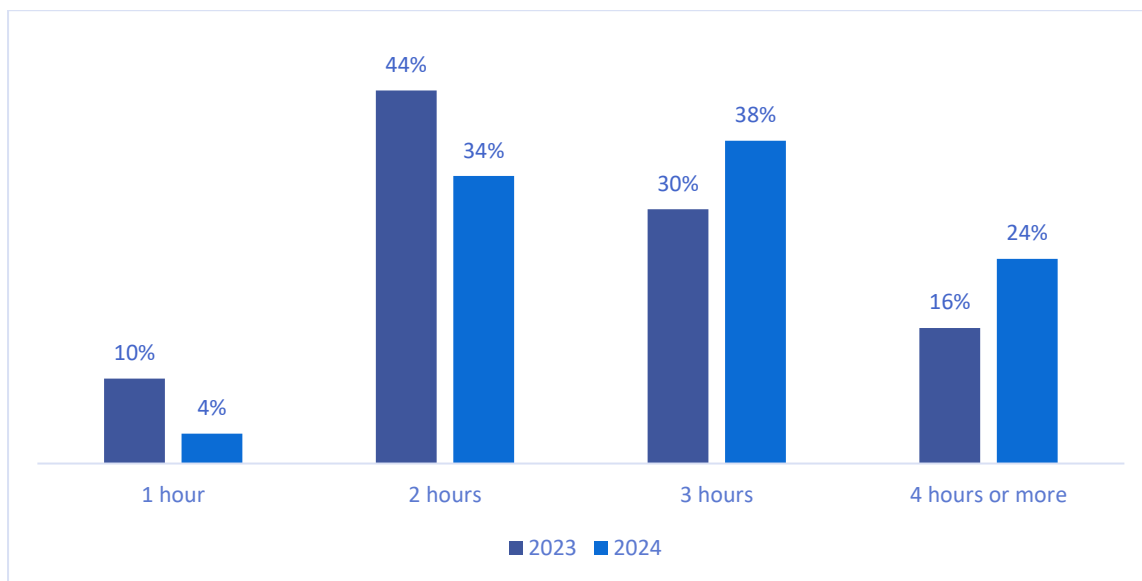
The London or South East allowance affects recruitment and retention for these force areas. For 35%, it affected their decision to join, and over half (52%) say that it influences their intention to stay within their force.

DOG HANDLER'S ALLOWANCE

A small proportion of officers (1%) take responsibility for Police dogs, looking after them at home when they are not working. They receive Dog Handler's Allowance to account for the extra cost and duties. Half of this group (50%) look after two dogs, with 40% caring for 1 dog.

The time burden of caring for the dogs has worsened over the last year. Most of those receiving the allowance (72%) are receiving a ‘kennel hour’ for every shift. However, even when taking this into account, officers are spending an increasing number of hours on this part of their role. Last year, 46% of respondents were giving at least 3 hours a day on average to looking after the police dogs – that figure is now 62%. A substantial majority of respondents (77%) feel like the Dog Handler’s Allowance is not sufficient, with just 13% saying that it is.

Figure 15: Excluding the 'kennel hour' (if applicable), on average how long do you spend outside of working hours caring for each of your police dogs per day?



CRITICAL SKILLS PAYMENT

Service Critical Skills Payments (also known as Targeted Variable Payments; TVPs) are discretionary payments made by the force to support recruitment or retention into specific (hard-to-fill) roles or against particular skills.

One in twenty officers (5%) are in receipt of TVPs, in line with 2023. The share of this group who are happy with the amount payment has increased from 20% in 2023 to 27% this year, although clearly still remains low.

Respondents were asked what reason they were given when awarded Service Critical Skills Payments, which is presented in Table 6. They are predominantly used to retain officers already in the role (72 per cent). Half of those surveyed (50 per cent) said that they were related to recruitment. Around 16 per cent said they were related to the potentially distressing nature of the work.

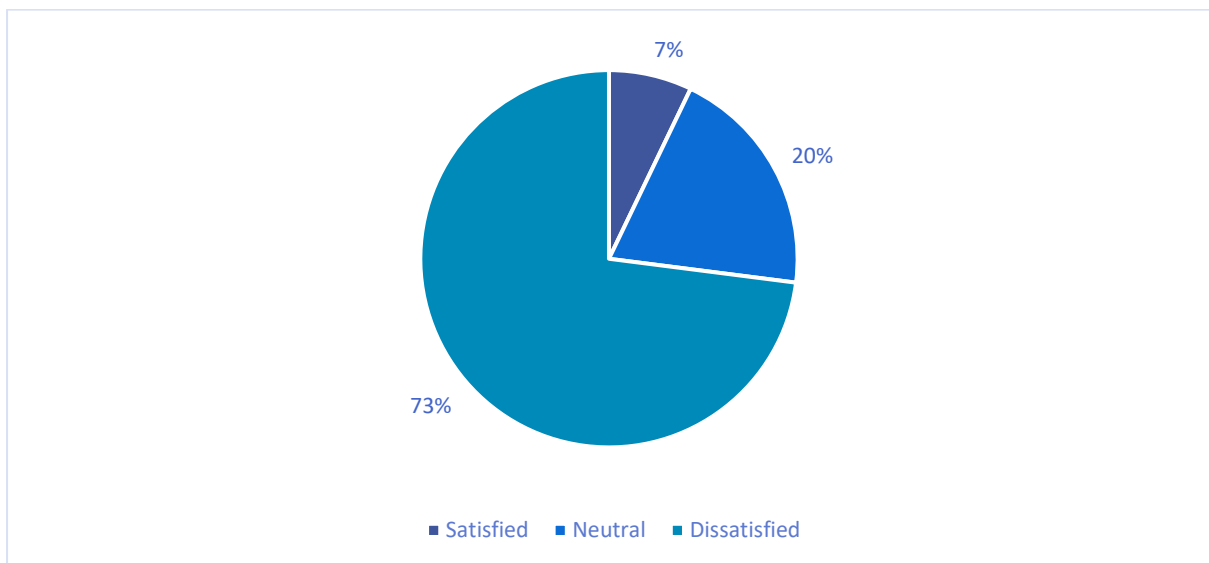
Table 6: What explanation did your force give for awarding a TVP/Service Critical Skills Payment to you?

Reason for TVP/Service Critical Skills Payment	2024
To retain officers already in the role	72%
To recruit officers into the role	50%
Because of the qualifications or skills required prior to taking on the role or once appointed	29%
Because of the potentially distressing nature of the work	16%
Because of the geographical location of your role	4%
Due to the cost of living crisis	0%

ON CALL ALLOWANCE

Constables, inspectors, chief inspectors, superintendents and chief superintendents are eligible for £25 for each day that they spend any time on call. This 'On Call Allowance' was received by 14% of respondents to this year's Pay and Morale survey. Two thirds of this group (63%) were on call 11 times or more in the past year, with 19% eligible for the allowance 5-10 times. Most recipients of the allowance are unhappy with the level of the £25 payment, as Figure 16 shows.

Figure 16: How satisfied are you with the amount you are paid for the on call allowance?



CONDITIONS

Table 7: Conditions KPIs

Table 7		Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Conditions		<i>Impact of workload & responsibilities on morale (% negative)</i>	66%	66%	0%pt	<i>Workload is harming morale for two-thirds of officers, in line with last year</i>
>	Workload	<i>% who rate workload as being 'too high'</i>	64%	63%	-1%pt	<i>Perceptions of workload have improved marginally, but remain worse than other professions such as the armed forces</i>
>	Overtime	<i>Average unpaid overtime per 4 week period</i>	5 hrs	6 hrs	1 hrs	<i>Rates of unpaid overtime are edging up</i>
>	Rostering and Night Shifts	<i>% who have worked more than 4 night shifts in a row</i>	38%	41%	3%pt	<i>The share of members breaching night shift guidelines has grown</i>
>	Rest Entitlement	<i>% who had at least 1 rest day cancelled in last year</i>	63%	66%	3%pt	<i>Two-thirds of officers have had rest days cancelled, an increase on last year</i>
>	Annual Leave Entitlement	<i>% taken all annual leave</i>	34%	34%	0%pt	<i>There has been no change in the number of members having annual leave cancelled</i>

The focus of this chapter is on working conditions. They remain a major driver of low officer morale, affecting two-thirds of members. There have been some positive developments in the last year; a quarter of respondents had had at least one day of annual leave cancelled over the past year, down from a third in 2023. Elsewhere, however, there has been regression. Officers are working more unpaid overtime (6 hours per 4 weeks up from 5 hours in 2023), are more likely to work more than 4 night shifts back to back, and have rest days cancelled.

Actions on Conditions from the PFEW2025 Strategy

- *We will hold Forces to account and, amongst other things, that*
 - *All leave entitlements should be taken and officers receive uninterrupted leave and rest days*
 - *Part time working arrangements are clear and where additional hours are worked these are being paid*
- *We will challenge Forces who say the right thing but do not deliver it in reality. We will:*
 - *Expose misuse of Regulations – such as the blanket use of exigencies*
 - *Shame Forces if poor equipment and uniforms are provided*
 - *Use the law to leverage our case*

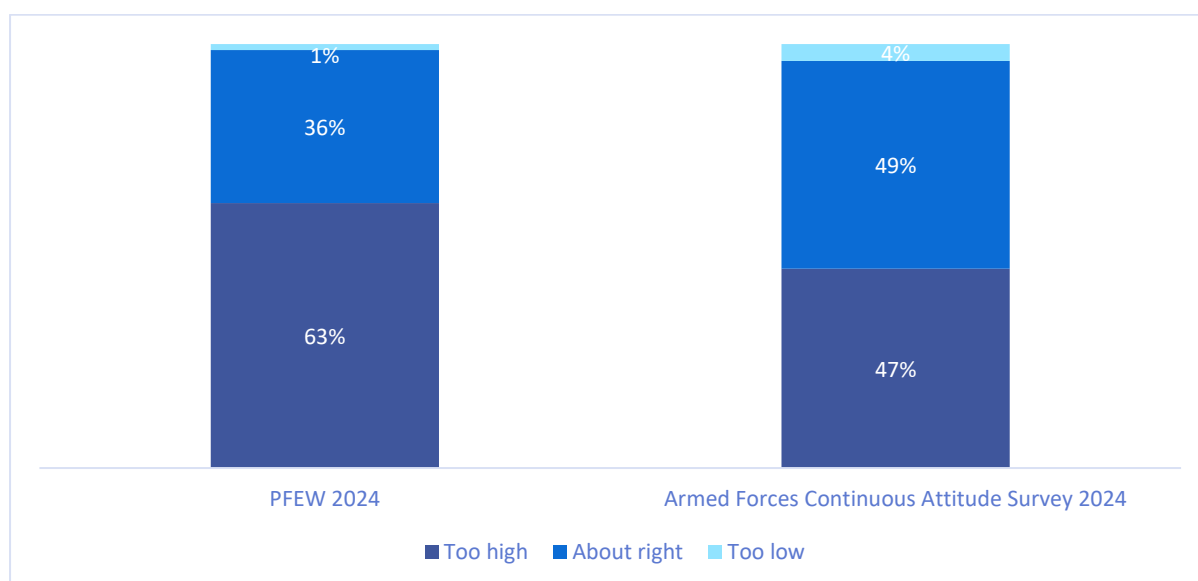
This section explores five themes: workload and its drivers, overtime, shift patterns, rest days and annual leave.

WORKLOAD

PFEW members are facing challenging workloads – 63% of them say that their workload is too high. This overwork is hitting morale for 66% of police officers. A poor work-life balance is dragging down morale for 61%.

The situation is worse than in some other uniformed professions - for example, in the Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) carries out the UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey. This year it had 9,320 respondents. As Figure 17 shows, less than half of them (47%) would similarly rate their workload as being too high.

Figure 17: How would you rate your workload over the last 12 months?



This workload impacts officers in a number of ways. A third (32%) are ‘always’ or ‘often’ pressured to work long hours, with a further third (34%) ‘sometimes’ facing this pressure. Four in ten (40%) always have unrealistic time pressures, with 31% always having to take work home that cannot be completed in their normal working hours. Over seven in ten (72%) feel like they do not have enough time to complete all of their case files during their shifts. The result of this is that three quarters of members (73%) feel like their team/unit does not have enough time to engage in proactive policing.

Staffing levels are a probable cause, as Table 8 illustrates. There has been no improvement in officer perceptions on adequate staffing levels with clear majorities feeling that they are

not determined effectively. Around 86 per cent of respondents ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that there are enough officers in their force to manage all the demands made on them. Some 85 per cent also ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’ that ‘the way officer staffing levels are determined seems to be effective’.

Table 8: Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about you and your fellow officers in regards to the last 12 months, % disagreeing

Staffing issues	2023	2024
In my experience, we generally have enough officers to manage all the demands being made on us as a team/unit	86%	86%
The way officer staffing levels are determined seems to be effective	85%	85%

There has been no improvement in rates of single crewing (when a officer is deployed without a partner) either. This can impact both workload and safety. This year and last year, 63% of officers said that they had ‘always’ been single crewed. Just 17% were ‘never’ single crewed.

OVERTIME

The share of officers working overtime has fallen slightly over the last year, from 90% to 88%, but still includes almost all respondents. In 2024, members worked a mean of 14 hours of paid overtime, with a median of 10 hours over a 4 week period. On unpaid overtime, they would carry out a mean of 6 hours and median of 4 hours over the same period. As Table 9 shows, positively, the mean rate of unpaid overtime has fallen from 8 hours to 6 hours whilst the rate of paid overtime is the same.

Table 9: Average hours of overtime per 4 week period¹¹

Average hours of overtime per 4 week period (Mean)	2023	2024
Paid overtime	14 hours	14 hours
Unpaid overtime	8 hours	6 hours

Similarly to last year, the data also shows that 46 per cent of respondents ‘always’ or ‘often’ worked more than 48 hours per week. One in three (30 per cent) ‘sometimes’ do so. Less than a quarter (24 per cent) ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ work that number of hours.

Figure 18 presents the most frequent reasons for officers working overtime. Not having enough officers in their team or unit was the most common cause. Wanting to finish work, emergency situations, and understaffing in other units were the next most frequent reasons.

¹¹ In previous reports, the overtime data focused on the median results. From 2024 onwards, the analysis will focus on the mean, which is a more widely used form of average. For comparison with last year, the median paid overtime has increased from 9 hours in 2023 to 10 hours in 2024. The median unpaid overtime fell slightly from 5 to 4 hours.

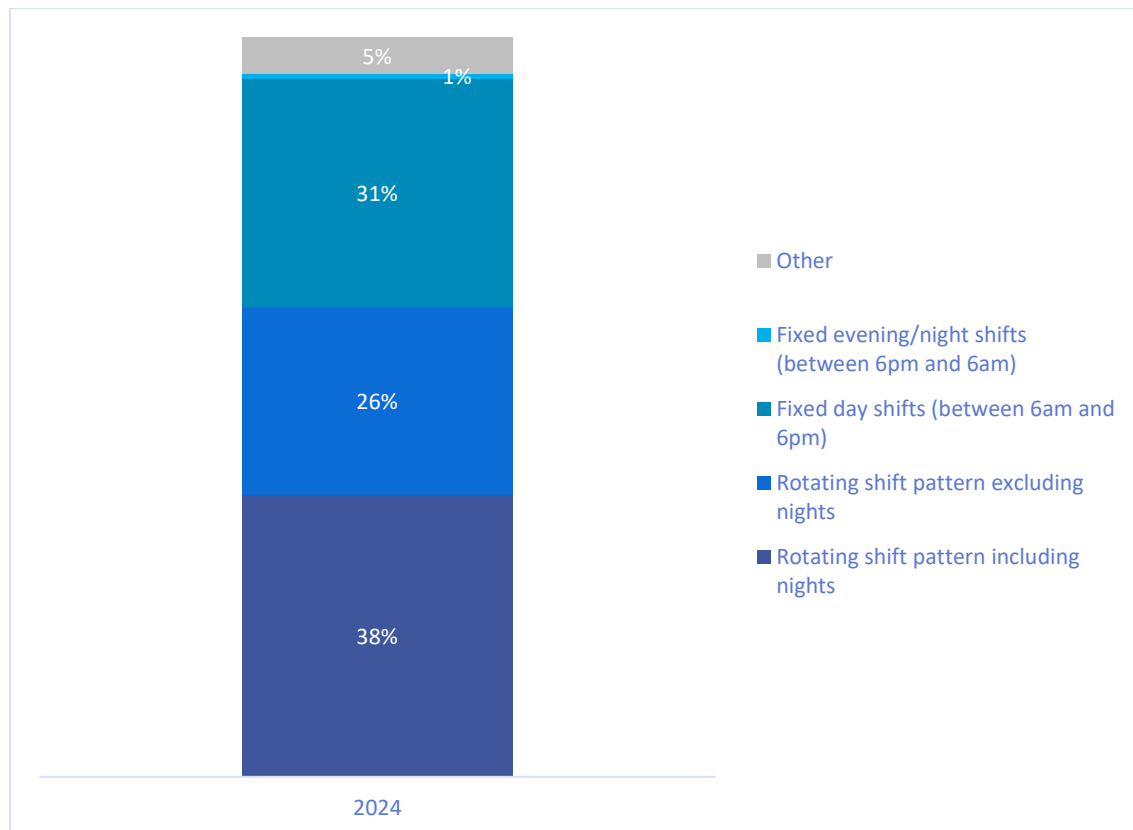
Figure 18: Most frequent reason for paid or unpaid overtime



ROSTERING AND NIGHT SHIFTS

Officers work a range of shift patterns, varying by role and by individual. Rotating shift patterns are the most common kind, with 38% having them including nights, and 26% excluding them. A third (31%) work fixed day shifts with a small number (1%) working fixed evening/night shifts, as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Which of the following best describes the shift pattern you typically work?



PFEW recommends that officers are not made to work more than four night shifts in a row, but two in five (41%) of them have had to do so, which is up on last year (38%). In this year's results, 9% of officers had this happen at least 6 times – once every two months - with 20% facing runs of 4 consecutive night shifts 2-5 times.

Shift patterns have become less predictable over the last year. Reliable shift rosters benefit staff, helping them to plan their life, and the further in advance that sight is given to them, the better. Last year, 21% of officers never had a roster changed due to exigencies of duty,

but in 2024 that fell to 17%, as Table 10 shows. One in five faced their roster being changed 10 or more times – roughly once a month.

Table 10: Frequency of roster being changed due to exigencies of duty in last 12 months

Frequency of roster being changed due to exigencies of duty in last 12 months	2023	2024
Never	21%	17%
Once	9%	10%
2-5 times	35%	38%
6-10 times	15%	16%
More than 10 times	20%	20%

REST ENTITLEMENT

Officers are entitled to at least one rest day a week, but most are missing out on this at least part of the time. Just 30% are ‘often’ or ‘always’ doing so, with nearly half (49%) ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ having at least one rest day. This is in line with the 2023 survey.

There is better abidance in ensuring officers have the 11-hour break between shifts. 78% ‘often’ or ‘always’ receive this, with 7% ‘never’ or ‘rarely’ doing so.

Officers have become more likely to have rest days cancelled over the last year. On average (mean), they had 4 rest days cancelled. Only a third (34%) had none cancelled in 2024, compared to 38% in 2023. Whilst 8% had a single rest day cancelled, nearly a third (31%) lost 2 to 4 rest days, with 19% having 5 to 10 cancelled. Nearly one in ten respondents (8%) had over 10 rest days cancelled.

ANNUAL LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

A third of officers did not take all their annual leave in 2024. Progress was made on this from 2022 to 2023, but there has been a reversal in 2024 as Table 11 shows. At least most respondents (88%) were able to carry over their remaining leave to the next year.

Table 11: Annual Leave

Annual Leave	2022	2023	2024
Taken all annual leave	61%	66%	64%

Respondents are also having a large number of requests for leave refused, happening on average 3 times across officers. Almost two thirds (65 per cent) have had at least one instance of annual leave being refused.

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

Table 12: Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Table 12		Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Health, Safety & Wellbeing		Life satisfaction (out of 10)	5.2	5.5	0.3	Officers' life satisfaction is far below the general public (7.5 ²) and armed forces (6.1 ³)
>	Officer Mental Health	% who find work 'very' or 'extremely stressful'	43%	44%	0%pt ¹²	More officers are finding work stressful
>	Mental Health Support	% who are 'poorly' or 'very poorly' supported after raising mental health with line manager	33%	32%	-1%pt	A third of officers are receiving a poor quality of mental health support from the Police service
>	Absence, Presenteeism & Leavism	% taking annual leave due to mental health	42%	36%	-7%pt	Four in ten officers are using annual leave to recover from mental health issues
>	Level of Risk from Citizens	% receiving verbal insults once or more a week	34%	34%	0%pt	Verbal insults are marginally less frequent than in 2022
>	Quality of Equipment and Procedures	% who do not always have access to double crewing	73%	73%	0%pt	Three quarters of officers do not have access to double crewing at all times

The story on officer Health, Safety & Wellbeing is mixed this year. There are some areas of improvement as the Table 12 shows. Average life satisfaction has improved slightly since 2023, and the share of officers taking annual leave due to mental health fell. However, life satisfaction remains shockingly low – well below that of those in the armed forces, and in the general population. A third of officers taking leave due to mental health is also still too high, and 44% find work 'very' or 'extremely' stressful. Managers are slightly less likely to

¹² Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from 0.3%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 43.3% and 43.6% respectively

provide poor support to their employees after they raise mental health issues, but a third of them are still doing so.

The risks of the role remain severe. A third are still facing verbal insults at least once a week. Members are also missing out on double crewing, with 73% not 'always' having access.

Actions on Health, Safety & Wellbeing from the PFEW2025 Strategy

- *We will hold Forces to account and, amongst other things, that*
 - *Good occupational health services are provided and trauma and mental health problems are recognised.*
 - *Quality equipment, PPE and uniform is provided and*
 - *Risks faced by Officers are understood and managed effectively*
- *We will challenge Forces who say the right thing but do not deliver it in reality. We will:*
 - *Expose misuse of Regulations – such as the blanket use of exigencies*
 - *Shame Forces if poor equipment and uniforms are provided*
 - *Use the law to leverage our case*

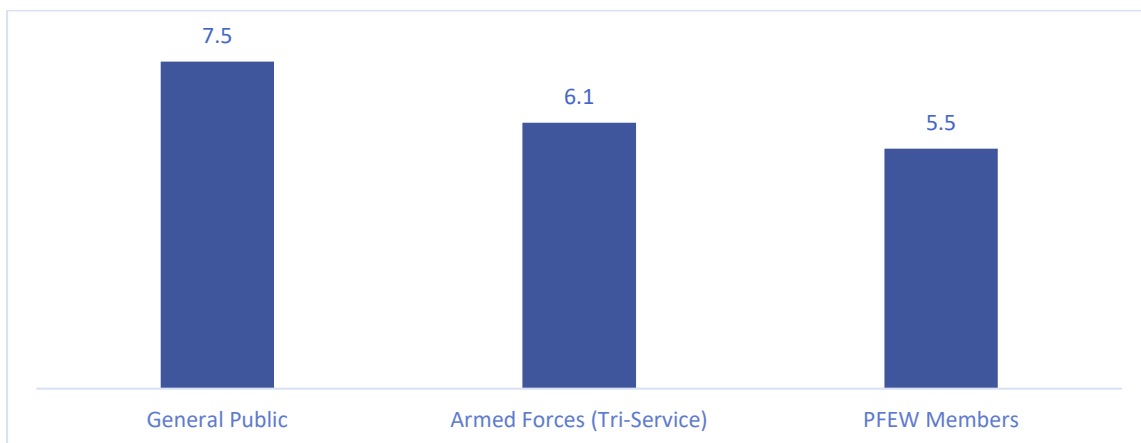
This section will look at topics pertaining to officers mental and physical wellbeing, and what police forces are doing to provide support. A following subsection will explore the risks that members face when dealing with the public, and the extent to which the right equipment and support is being provided.

OFFICER MENTAL HEALTH

Life satisfaction is worryingly low for police officers, relative to the general public and other uniformed professions such as the armed forces. Respondents were asked to answer ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?’ on a scale running from a low of 0 to a high of 10. Officers scored their life satisfaction at 5.5 out of 10 on average.

This is an increase on last year (5.2) but is well below the general public, who scored 7.5¹³ and the armed forces who scored 6.1¹⁴, as shown in Figure 20. This gap is not explained by demographics alone. Happiness is often described as a U-shape: higher in youth and older age, and lower in middle age. Police officers are more likely to be parts of the U-shape where happiness is lower, but the difference is not drastic enough to explain how far behind in life satisfaction PFEW members are, though. In the general population, 16-19 year olds have a mean life satisfaction of 7.8, which falls to 7.3 for 45-49 year olds, and then rises to 7.7 from 65. The difference across these age bands is just 0.5, whilst the gap between the average officer and member of the public is 2.0.

Figure 20: Average life satisfaction out of 10

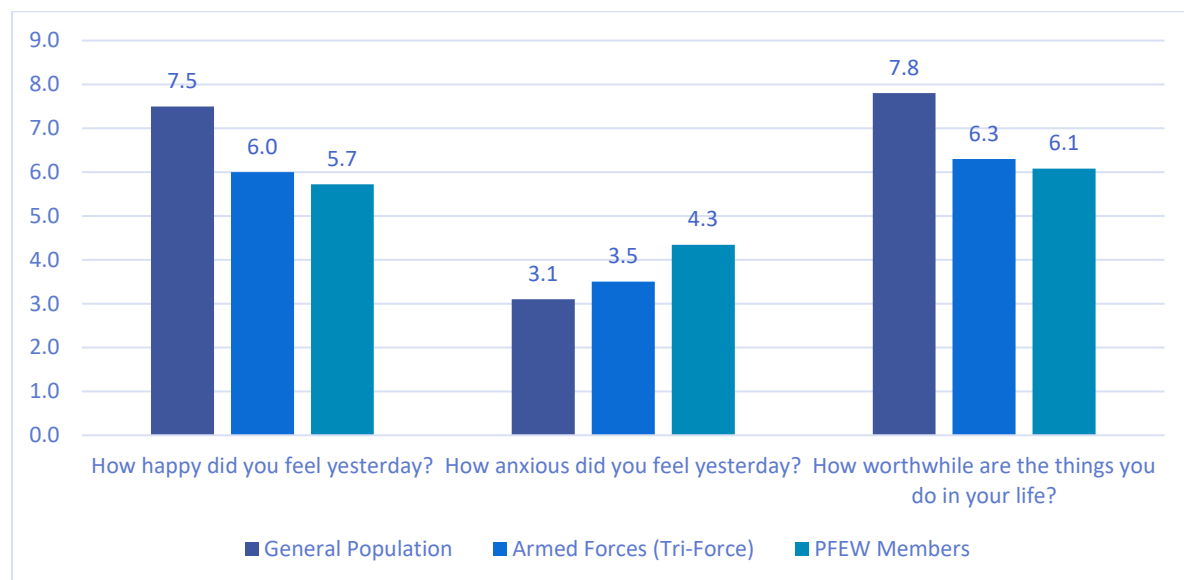


¹³ Office of National Statistics (2024). Quarterly personal well-being estimates – non-seasonally adjusted, UK: April to June 2024. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/quarterlypersonalwellbeingestimatesnonseasonallyadjusted> (Accessed: 29 January 2025).

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66506da2adfc6a4843fe0513/Armed_Forces_Continuous_Attitude_Survey_2024_Main_Report.pdf

As well as the life satisfaction question, there are a set of other questions that look at wellbeing and are standardised to be used across different surveys. This allows us to further benchmark police officers against other groups. The findings from the other questions reflect a similar pattern. Police officers are markedly less happy and more anxious than those in the armed forces and the general public.

Figure 21: Breakdown of average life satisfaction out of 10



Officers are exhausted, as well as unhappy. Most (61%) find it difficult to carry out certain duties and responsibilities at work because of fatigue. Even more officers (73%) find that fatigue is impacting their family or social life.

Stress is widespread. Nearly half (44%) of officers find their job 'very stressful' with 39% saying that it is 'moderately stressful'. For some, this continues in their personal life, with 35% finding life outside of work very or moderately stressful.

Table 13: Mental health and wellbeing

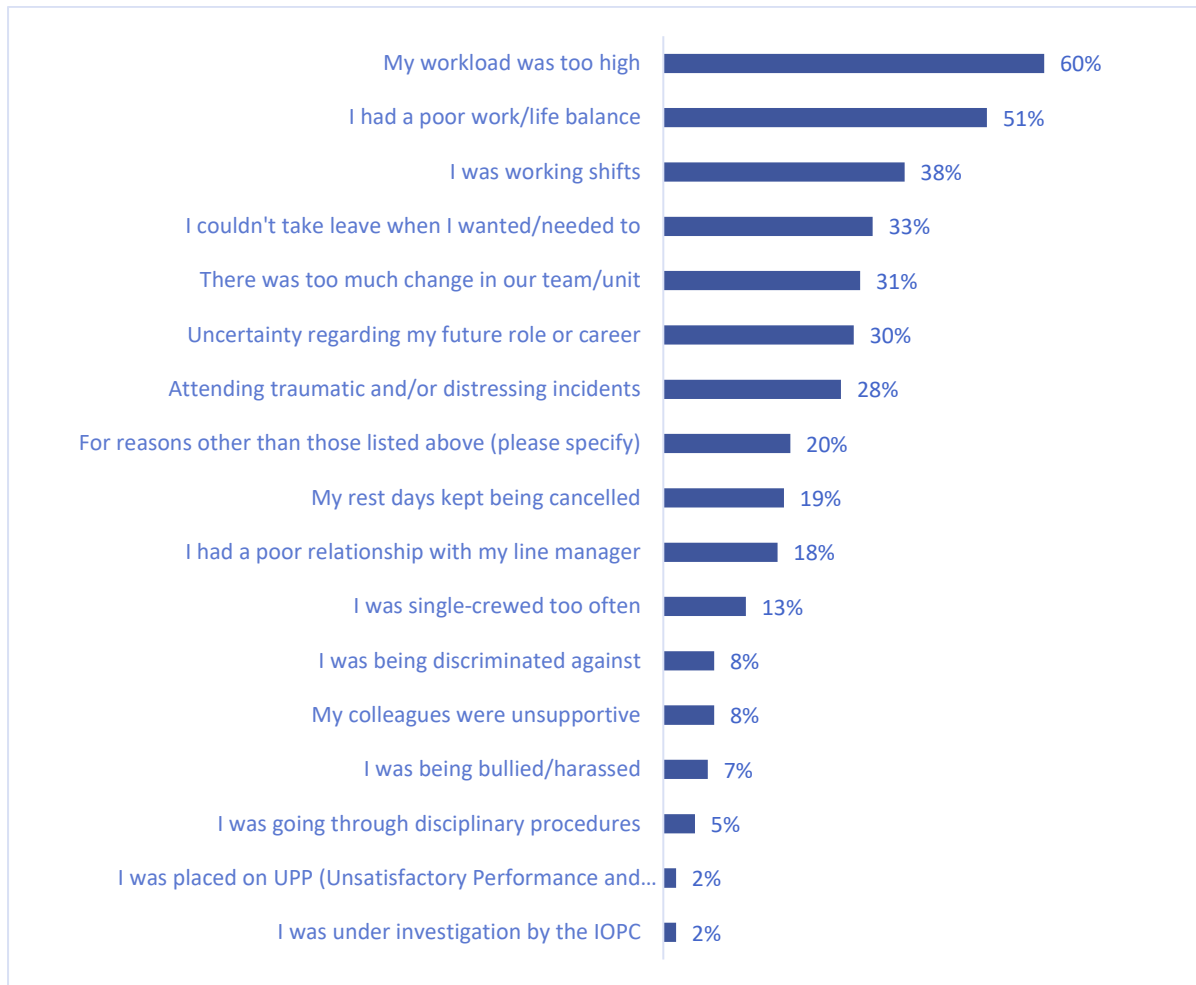
Mental health and wellbeing	2020	2022	2023	2024
Proportion of respondents reporting that they find their job is 'very' or 'extremely' stressful.	33%	42%	43%	44%
Proportion of respondents reporting that they have experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months.	77%	82%	82%	81%

These strains are being felt in rates of mental health challenges. Four in five officers experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their mental health or wellbeing in 2024. This is in line with the previous year, but up from 77 per cent in 2020. Almost all of these officers (93%) say that work has worsened these mental health issues.

The mental health impacts of policing are posing a threat to levels of officer retention. Members were asked what reasons they had for planning to leave the police service, and the mental health and wellbeing ramifications of the role had a major effect for 75%, and had some effect for 21% - it was the second most significant factor, below 'morale' and ahead of pay, impact on personal life and the government's treatment of the profession.

Officers who felt that mental health problems were worsened by work were asked what aspects of the job had affected them, as shown in Figure 22. A high workload (60%) and a poor work/life balance (51%) were the most pressing challenges. Problems with working patterns, such as working shifts and not being able to take leave were also a common problem, affecting around a third of officers each.

Figure 22: Aspects of work that impacted mental health and wellbeing



Impact Of Job On Mental Health

“Being constantly fatigued from work, having to miss out on rest day social time because I had to sleep after work, but I can't meet them before a shift because I'll be too tired for work, but I also can't meet them after unless I've slept properly as I'm too tired. So I am missing out on lots of opportunities to see friends and families on my rest days.”

Officer

“Constantly working with faulty equipment...weak, inexperienced supervision...other teams dumping on patrol.”

Officer

“Fear of constantly being sacked because the organisation now expects officers to be robots not humans. There is no room for human error and fear anything could cause you to lose your job.”

Officer

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

There is a growing awareness and recognition across society of mental health issues and the impacts that they can have. The last section outlined how acute these issues are across the police force.

Almost half of officers (46%, in line with 2023) are aware of their forces offering some kind of proactive support, designed to help team members before mental health issues develop or worsen. Figure 23 below shows which kinds of interventions were most commonly seen by those who had been offered proactive support. Wellbeing champions are the most commonly accessible (65%), ahead of gym access (60%) and wellbeing rooms (56%) which were also widely available.

Figure 23: Type of proactive mental health support offered (of the 46% of respondents who are aware of proactive support)

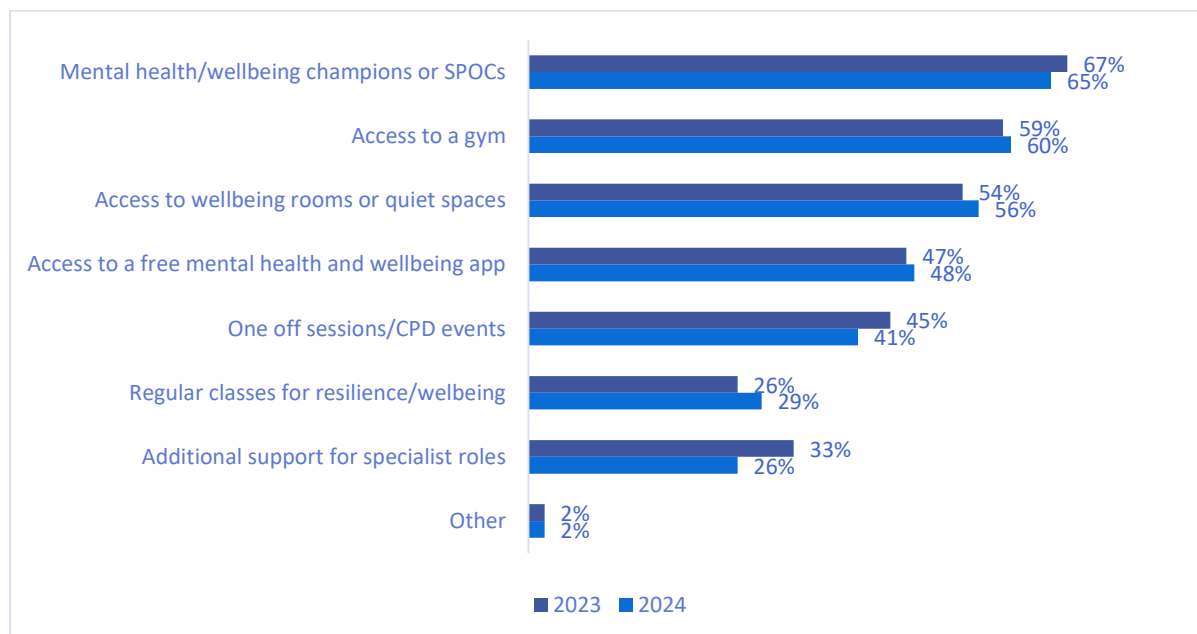
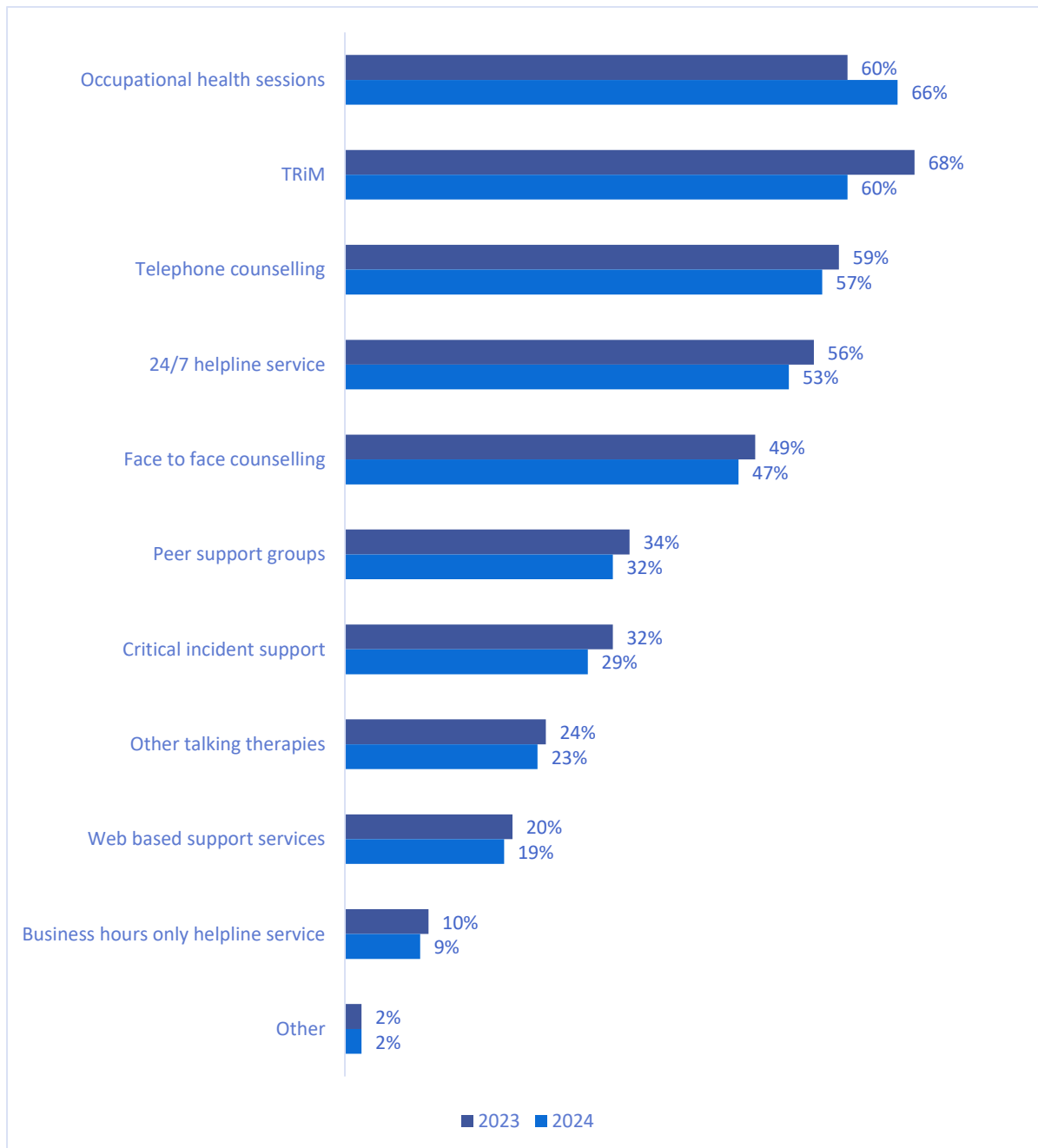


Figure 24: Type of reactive mental health support offered (of the 80% of respondents who are aware of reactive support)



Reactive mental health and wellbeing support is more widely available than the proactive kind, or at least the awareness of it is higher. Four in five officers (80%) are now aware of reactive support services, which is an increase on the 77% last year.

Within officers aware of there being some reactive support on offer, there has been a drop in awareness of most particular kinds of reactive support since last year as Figure 24 demonstrates. The exception is with occupational health sessions, where 66% of those aware of reactive support cite them, compared to 60% of that group in 2023.

The proportion of officers who have sought help with their mental health has increased again this year, from 45% in 2022, to 46% in 2023 and to 48% this year. The managers of team members struggling with their mental health can have an important role to support their officers. To enable that, the team member needs to be happy to discuss these issues with their manager. Most (75%) of those receiving support for their mental health had told their boss, but clearly not everyone is comfortable to do this.

The quality of support that officers received when they did tell their managers was inconsistent. A minority of respondents (40%) who had had those conversations felt that they were well supported by the police service after it, although that is an improvement on 2023 (38%). 45% of respondents felt like they had been given the right support, and half felt like they were given enough support (50%). Most felt like the discussion was handled confidentially (73%) and that they were treated with dignity and respect (67%) and empathy (62%). So, for most, then, managers are behaving as would be wished but clearly this is something that all should be doing, not just most. Worryingly, 16% said that they were treated differently in a negative way after they discussed their mental health with their line manager.

Table 14: In your experience, how well were you supported by the police service after you discussed your mental health and wellbeing with your line manager?

In your experience, how well were you supported by the police service after you discussed your mental health and wellbeing with your line manager?	2022	2023	2024
Poorly or very poorly	33%	33%	32%
Adequately	28%	29%	29%
Fairly well or very well	39%	38%	40%

Quality Of Support After Disclosing Mental Health Challenge To Manager

"A complete waste of time, the organisation shows zero consideration for the welfare of individuals who work in custody and the stress and demand that comes from this role."

Officer

"Direct line manager is great but processes for help I needed were drawn out for way too long"

Officer

"Fantastic support from my line manager. Terrible support from the organisation as a whole."

Officer

"I can honestly say the treatment of my line manager was the worst experience in my career. He show[ed] zero emotional awareness / intelligence and basically discarded me. I tried to raise my poor welfare management to my second line manager (Superintendent) and felt fobbed off. I was basically left out on my own. My line manager "leadership" is a facade and he just cares about himself."

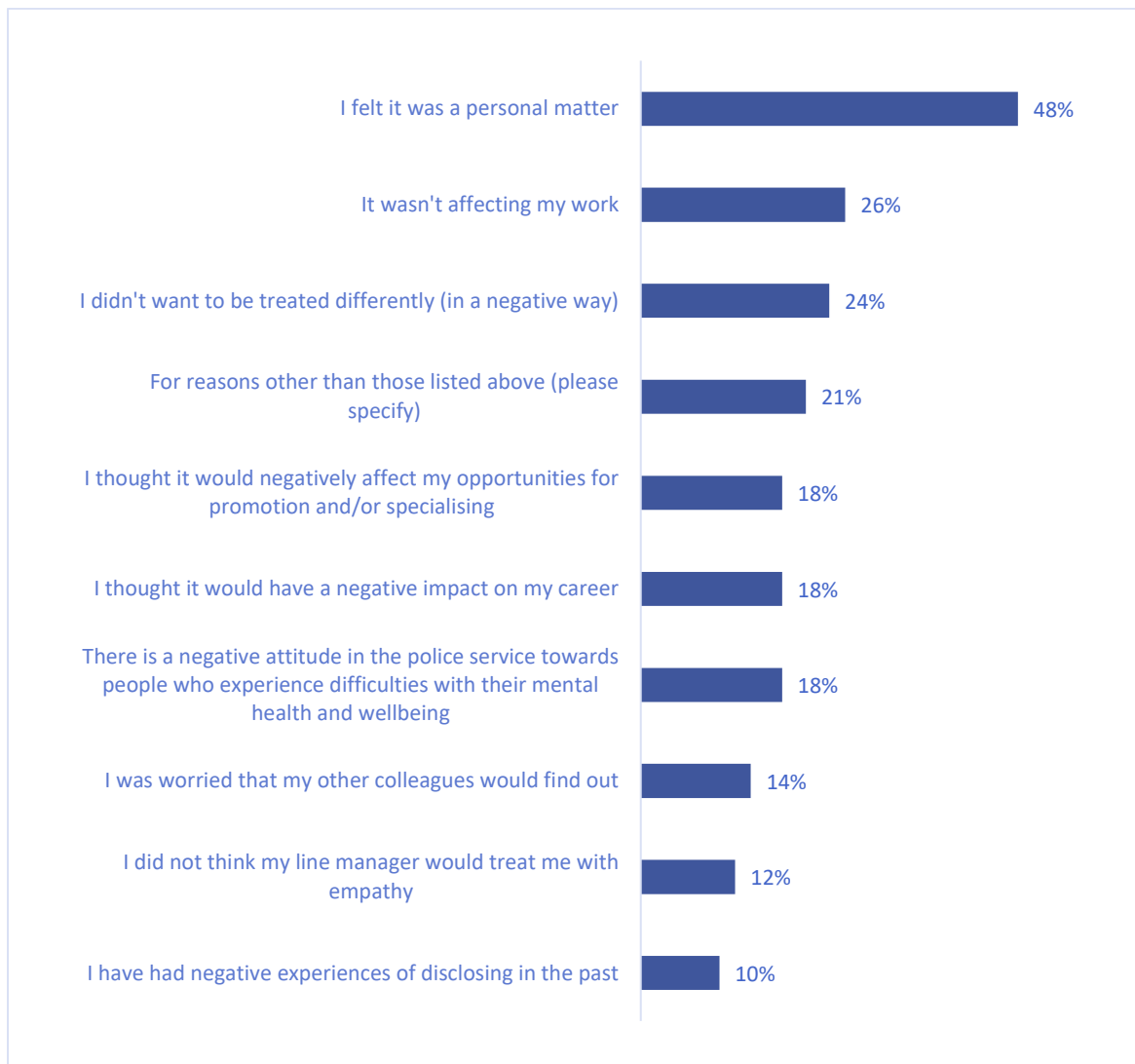
Officer

"I was incredibly well supported by my line managers throughout my illness and then to return to work."

Officer

Those who had sought support for mental health issues, but not disclosed this to their managers, were asked why they had chosen not to inform them. The most common reason (48%) was that they considered it to be a personal matter. The next most popular reasons were that their mental health issues were not affecting their work (26%), and that they did not want to be treated differently (24%), as Figure 25 shows.

Figure 25: Reason for not telling manager about seeking support for mental health issues



The quotes below also illustrate the issues that officers have in being open with their colleagues about mental health and seeking support.

Reason For Not Disclosing Mental Health Issues To Manager

“Don't actually think anyone cares. So many of us are medicated/seeking help”

Officer

“My vetting level could be reduced”

Officer

“Senior officers are meant to suck it up and get on with it. Little empathy for MH compared to lower ranks.”

Officer

ABSENCE, PRESENTEEISM, AND LEAVEISM

This portion of the report looks at how officers are not taking sick leave when they should ('presenteeism'), and are using annual leave instead of sick leave ('leavism'). Presenteeism has been linked with bad health outcomes (particularly with relation to burnout), negative attitudes towards work, and withdrawal.^{15,16} The share of officers who reported experiencing presenteeism or leavism are shown in Table 15 below, along with comparisons to previous years.

There has been little change on presenteeism – 70% of officers felt like they should have taken sick leave because of a physical ailment in the last 12 months, compared to 71% in 2023. The rate for mental health issues was 68%, in line with last year. There was a decline in leavism, with officers less likely to use annual leave to take time off for a physical health issue in the last year issue (32% in 2024 vs 35% in 2023) and for a mental health issue (36% in 2024 down from 42% in 2023).

¹⁵ Demerouti, E., Le Blanc, P., Bakker, A., Schaufeli, W., & Hox, J. (2009). *Present but sick: A three- wave study on job demands, presenteeism, and burnout*. Career Development International. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238406225_Presnet_but_sick_A_three=wave_study_on_job_demands_presenteeism_and_burnout, doi: 10.1108/13620430910933574.

¹⁶ Lu, L., Lin, H. Y., & Cooper, C. L. (2013). *Unhealthy and present: Motives and consequences of the act of presenteeism among Taiwanese employees*. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24099160/>, doi: 10.1037/a0034331.

Table 15: Absence and Presenteeism

Absence and Presenteeism		Proportion of respondents going to work despite feeling they should have taken sick leave once or more over the previous 12 months...			
		2020	2022	2023	2024
Presenteeism	Due to physical health	66%	66%	71%	70%
	Due to mental health	66%	67%	68%	68%
Using annual leave to take time off due to health ('leaveism')	Due to physical health	31%	33%	35%	32%
	Due to mental health	42%	42%	42%	36%

Officers are taking more sick leave than in 2023. On average, they took 5.6 days of annual leave in 2024, compared to 5.3 in 2023. Of this, the majority was again due to mental health rather than physical health, accounting for 4.4 of those 5.6 days.

Table 16: Sick leave

Sick leave	Days of sick leave	Day of sick leave which were for mental health
Average days of sick leave over last 12 months	5.6	4.4

VIOLENCE FROM CITIZENS

One of the risks that officers face is violence from citizens in the course of their duty. Table 17 shows these results for 2023 and 2024. For each form of violence examined, there has been no change in the likelihood of respondents facing these things on a weekly basis. The most common was verbal insults, which a third of officers (34%) have to deal with at least once a week on average. Verbal threats (21%) and unarmed physical attacks (11%) were the next most frequent.

Table 17: Violence from citizens

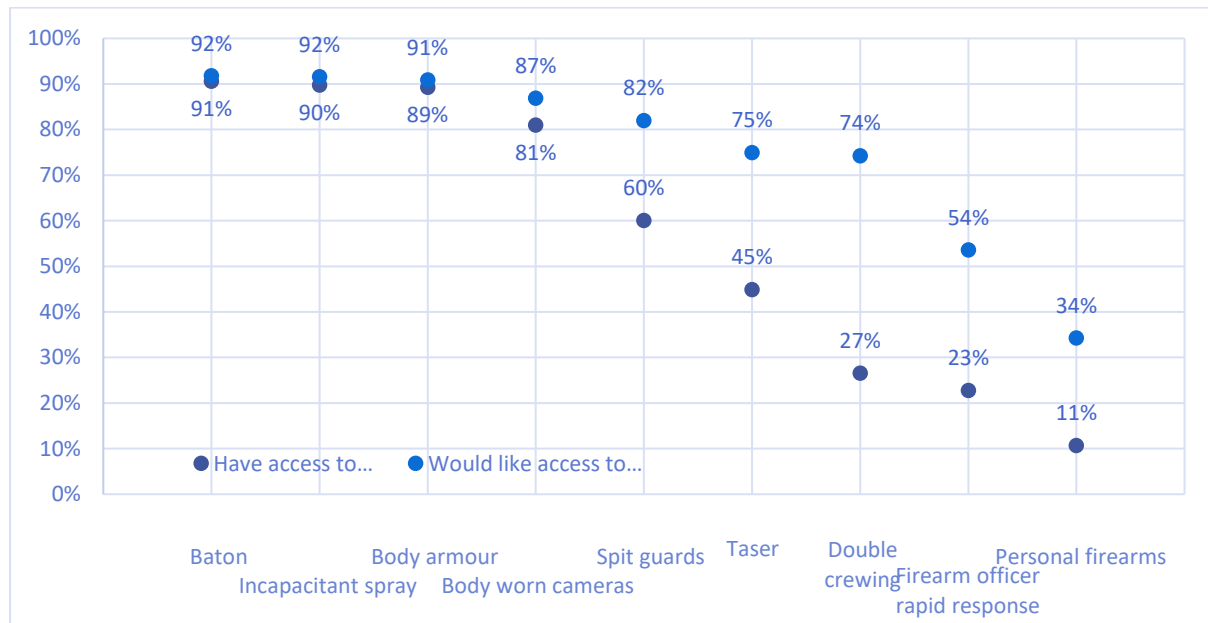
Violence from citizens	<i>Proportion of respondents reporting that they have experienced the following at least once a week over the previous 12 months...</i>	
	2023	2024
Verbal insults (e.g., swearing, shouting, abuse)	34%	34%
Verbal threats (e.g. threat of hitting, threat of kicking)	21%	21%
Spitting assaults (i.e., being deliberately spat upon)	3%	3%
Unarmed physical attacks (e.g., struggling to get free, wrestling, hitting, kicking)	11%	11%
Use of a deadly weapon (e.g., stick, bottle, axe, firearm)	1%	1%

QUALITY OF EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES

There is a mismatch between how regularly officers would like to get access to certain forms of equipment or procedures, and how often they do in practice. Figure 26 presents the share of respondents that would like to have access to that equipment/practice all of the time that they are working, versus the share that do get access all the time.

Access to batons, incapacitant spray and body armour is available to almost all of the officers that want it – roughly nine in ten of them. For the other forms of protection, access ‘at all times’ is not as common as respondents would like. The largest disparity is on double crewing. Three quarters (74%) of officers would like to always be double crewed, but only one quarter (27%) are in reality.

Figure 26: Level of access at all times to equipment and procedures



EQUALITY

Table 18: Equality KPIs

Table 18		Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Equality		Difference in % rating morale 'high' or 'very high' between highest and lowest segment (average)	6%pt	5%pt	-1%pt	The morale level is low across all groups; there has been little change except in age which had the largest differences and has narrowed since 2023
>	Gender	Difference in % rating morale 'high' or 'very high' between highest and lowest segment	2%pt	3%pt	0%pt ¹⁷	There has been little change in the difference in morale between women and men
>	Sex		n/a	3%pt	n/a	This is the first year that analysis by sex has been conducted
>	Ethnicity		6%pt	6%pt	0%pt	Black officers have the highest morale and Asian officers have the lowest morale, with the difference similar to 2023
>	Sexuality		0%pt	1%pt	1%pt	Gay or lesbian officers have slightly higher morale than heterosexual or bisexual ones
>	Age		16%pt	12%pt	-4%pt	The large gap between higher morale younger officers and lower morale older officers has closed somewhat since 2023

This section focuses on the 'Equality' subcategory of the PFEW2025 Member's Agenda. In the survey, officers are asked about their personal characteristics, including gender, ethnicity, sexuality and age. This year, they were also asked about their sex. The analysis in this section compares a range of measures across those different characteristics - level of morale, work stress, the extent to which mental health is worsened by work, as well as the impact of discrimination. Table 18 above presents the results for one of these measures, morale, and shows the biggest gap between groups on each characteristic – such as between men and women on gender.

¹⁷ Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from 0.4%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 2.1% and 2.5% respectively.

One thing to note when reviewing this section is that differences across groups on these measures is not exclusively down to their experience at work. There are a range of societal factors that mean that some groups may have lower morale, or find work more stressful. As was noted last year, the Office for National Statistics did an analysis looking at life satisfaction across different characteristics. On age, it found that those aged 35-64 were more likely to have low life satisfaction than those aged 30-34 – this ‘u curve’ is well documented.¹⁸ Those who identified as bisexual were also more likely to have low satisfaction.¹⁹

Further analysis is therefore required to properly understand whether differences in the measures presented in this section are due to officer’s jobs, or to other factors.

Actions on Conditions from PFEW2025 Strategy

- *We will hold Forces to account and, amongst other things, that*
 - *Policies on equality are delivering what they aim for*

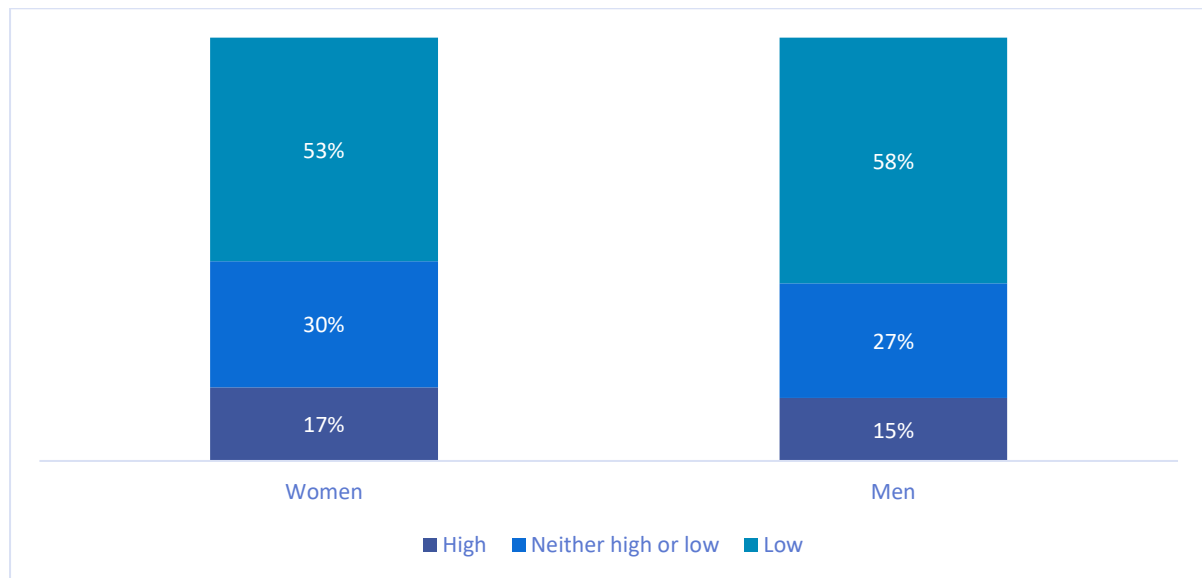
¹⁸ <https://www.midus.wisc.edu/findings/pdfs/2196.pdf>

¹⁹ Office of National Statistics (2022). *Equality across different areas of life in the UK: 2011 to 2020*. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/methodologicalpublications/generalmethodology/onsworkingpaper/series/equalityacrossdifferentareasoflifeintheuk2011to2020#:~:text=In%202020%20across%20the%20UK,for%20age%20and%20sex%20only> (Accessed on: 23 January 2024).

GENDER

Most men and women in the force have low morale, but the situation is worse for men – 58% of them have low morale compared to 53% of women. Just 15% of men have high morale, compared to 17% of women. This gap is roughly the same as last year.

Figure 27: Level of morale by gender



Levels of work stress have edged up across men and women. In 2023, 42% of women found their job ‘very stressful’ – now it is 43%. With men too, there has been a 1% point increase from 43% in 2023 to 44% this year.

The survey asked respondents whether they had mental health issues, and then whether that was worsened by work. Men have become more likely to have mental health issues caused by or worsened by work since last year, with the proportion rising from 70% to 74% of all respondents in 2024. For women, the rate is higher at 77%, up on 75% in 2023.

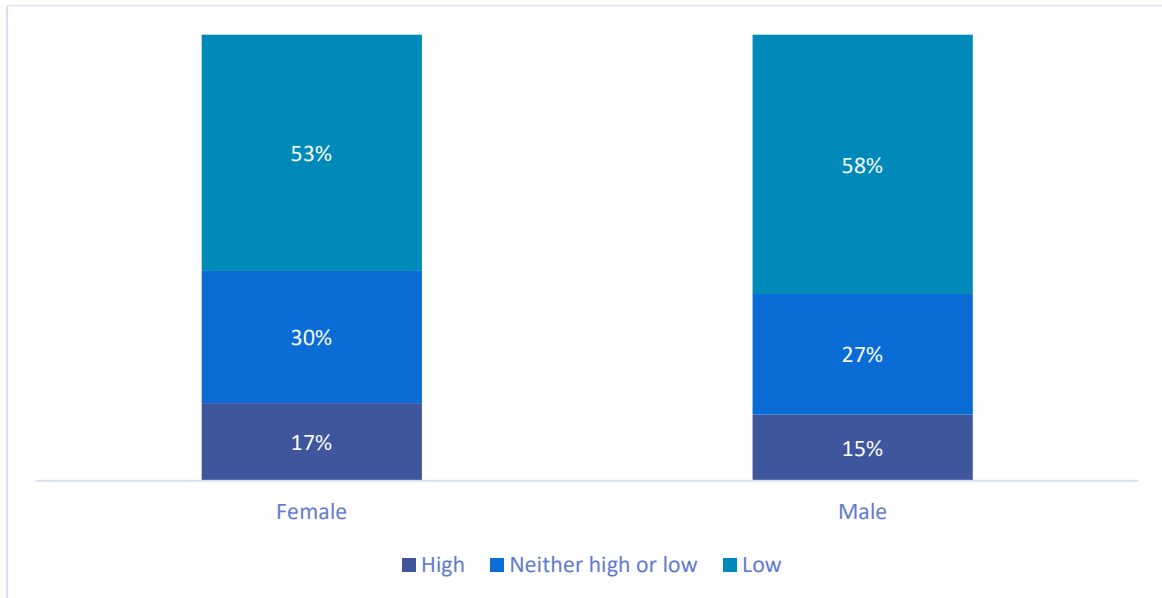
Respondents who had reported having mental health issues, and that these were also caused by work were then asked what factors had caused this. Women are also more likely to report facing discrimination at work that is harming their mental health - whilst 5% of men reported this, 6% of women did.

It is not possible to present results for people who identify as non-binary, or who use a different term to non-binary, male or female, due the amount of data being below the reporting threshold.

SEX

Levels of morale by sex relate closely to those by gender. A majority of both sexes have low morale: 58% of male officers and 53% of female officers.

Figure 28: Level of morale by sex



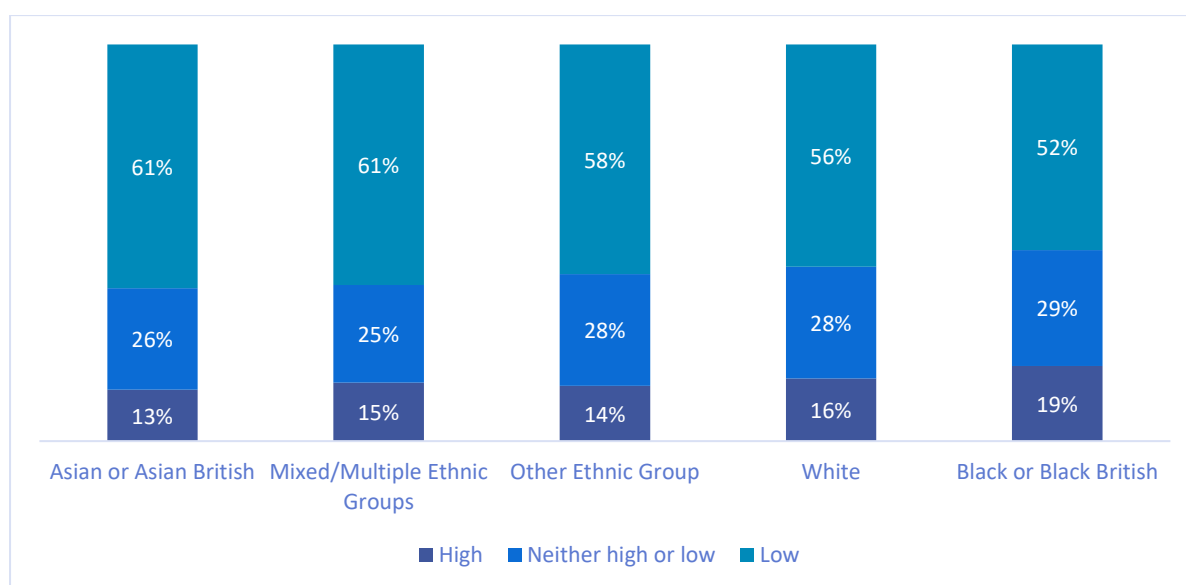
Male officers are marginally more likely to find their work 'very stressful' (44% vs 43% for female officers). However female officers are more likely than male officers to experience mental health issues that have been caused or worsened by work – 77% of female officers have, compared to 74% of male officers.

Female officers are more likely to experience discrimination during work that negatively impacts their mental health – 6% of female respondents had, compared to 5% of male ones.

ETHNICITY

The picture on morale across different ethnic groups is similar to 2023. Black or Black British officers were least likely to have low morale (52% in 2024 and 2023). Asian or Asian British officers, and those from mixed/multiple ethnic groups were most likely to have low morale. The morale of White officers once more falls somewhere in-between. The biggest change is with officers from other ethnic groups. Last year, they had the worst morale, with 65% rating it low, whilst this year 58% rate their morale as low.

Figure 29: Level of morale by ethnicity

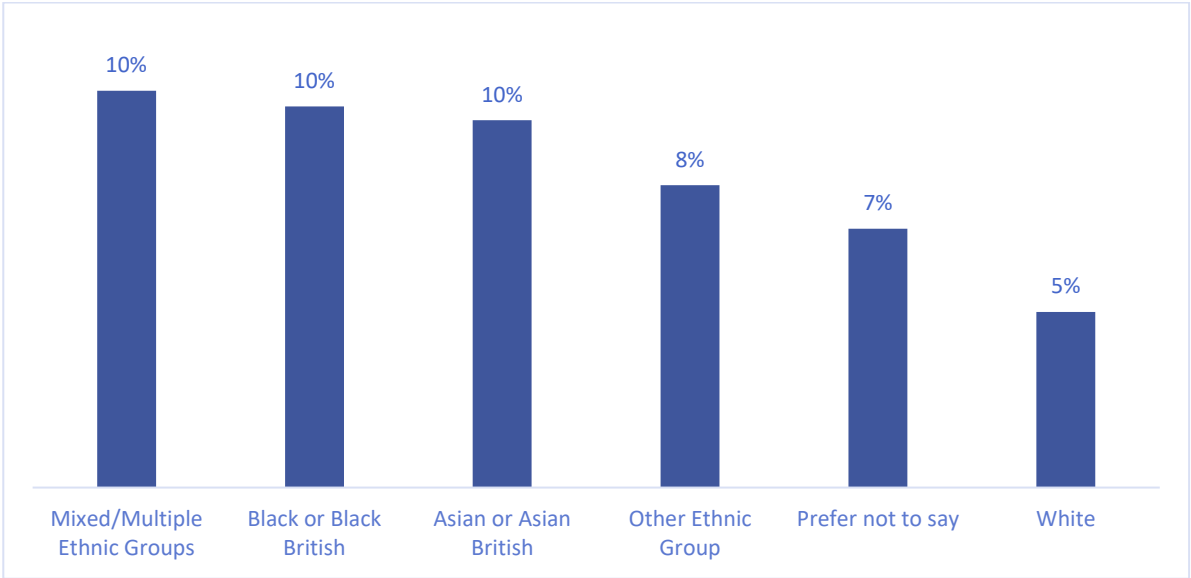


White officers, and those from other ethnic groups were least likely to find the job ‘very stressful’ (43% saying this in 2024). The most likely were Asian or Asian British officers (51%), and then Black or Black British officers (48%). However, Black or Black British officers and officers from other ethnic groups were marginally less likely to say that their mental health was being worsened by work – 73% of officers said this. This compares to 75% of White and Asian or Asian British officers, and 76% of officers with mixed or multiple ethnicities.

People of colour are much more likely to experience discrimination at work that impacts their mental health than White officers are, as Figure 30 shows. One in ten Asian or Asian British respondents, Black or Black British respondents and respondents from mixed or

multiple ethnic groups reported that discrimination during work had harmed their mental health. This is double than the 5% of white respondents who said the same.

Figure 30: Proportion of respondents who report that discrimination during work has impacted their mental health



SEXUALITY

Bisexual officers were the most likely to have 'low' or 'very low' morale (58%) and to find their work 'very stressful'. Gay or lesbian officers were less likely to have low morale than other groups – 54% had 'low' or 'very low' morale compared to 56% of heterosexual officers – but somewhat more likely to find work stressful than heterosexual respondents (46% compared to 43%).

Table 19: How respondents find their job by sexuality

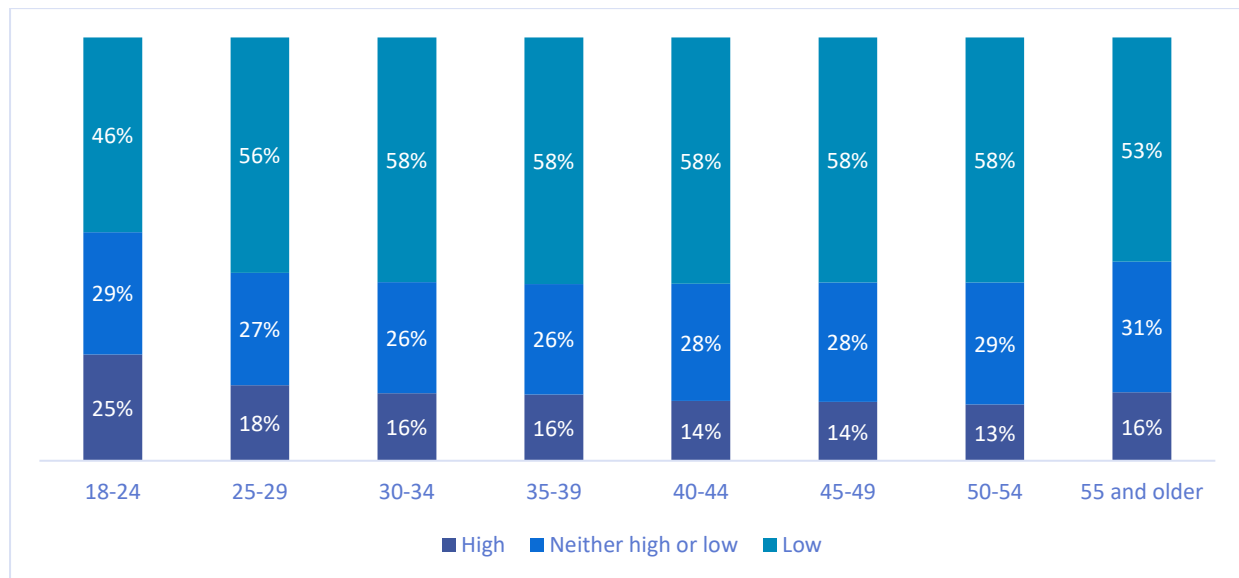
How respondents find their job	Heterosexual/ Straight	Gay or Lesbian	Bisexual	I use another term	Prefer not to say
Not stressful	18%	17%	14%	17%	15%
Moderately stressful	39%	38%	35%	32%	37%
Very stressful	43%	46%	51%	51%	48%

This picture is also seen in the proportion of officers who have mental health problems that have been worsened by work. Nearly 9 in 10 (89%) of officers who use another term to describe their sexuality experienced this, with 86% of bisexual officers, 78% of gay or lesbian officers and 74% of heterosexual officers. Respondents who use another term to describe their sexuality were also the most likely to have experienced discrimination during work that has harmed their mental health – 15% of this group had experienced this. Of bisexual officers, 7% had done so, compared to 5% of gay, lesbian or heterosexual officers.

AGE

Morale among officers is least negative when they are younger. Less than half (46%) of those aged 18-24 have low morale. This increases to 56% for 25-29 year olds, and then stays at 58% from 30 until 54. Things improve slightly in the older age group of over 55s, where the share with low morale drops back to 53%. This pattern reflects life satisfaction by age group – the ‘U-curve’ mentioned in the section introduction. These results are shown in Figure 31, below.

Figure 31: Level of morale by age



Although morale is better in younger groups, they are also more likely to find work stressful and to suffer from mental health issues caused or made worse by work. 58% of those aged 25-29 find work stressful compared to 35% of 50-54s. More than four in five 25-29 year olds (81%), 77% of 18-24 year olds and 78% of 30-34 year olds say that work has impacted their mental health. For other groups this proportion ranges from 76% for 35-39 year olds down to 66% of those aged 55 and older.

Table 20: How respondents find their job by age

How respondents find their job	18 – 24	25 – 29	30 – 34	35 – 39	40 – 44	45 – 49	50 – 54	55+
Not stressful	11%	10%	15%	18%	19%	20%	22%	24%
Moderately stressful	34%	32%	35%	38%	40%	42%	43%	42%
Very stressful	56%	58%	50%	44%	41%	38%	35%	35%

However, older officers are also more likely to feel that their mental health has been impacted due to discrimination at work. Whilst 2% of 18-24 year old respondents report that discrimination at work is harming their mental health, 6% of respondents over 50 do.

Comments Relating to Equality Issues in Policing

"[I was] Subjected to racial discrimination by former line manager and lack of any real action by force to deal with that and being followed by male line manager, wasn't taken seriously. Failure to implement reasonable adjustments too."

Officer

"I am completely age discriminated against with my pension and this has a big impact on my MH and motivation."

Officer

"I have a mental disability and believe I will not be selected or supported for Promotion. I am aware of the Equality Act but I believe the job will make up excuses to prevent me from promoting."

Officer

"My mental health concerns are as a result of the menopause. I am really open about the struggles I have had, and although the Force are supposedly really good ambassadors of the menopause and being a menopause friendly employer - I am not sure how they got this title. The force pay lip service to this side of MH struggles in woman."

Officer

"I never saw misogyny throughout my career until very recently. I'm shocked and saddened by it. The bullying by certain supervisors is ridiculous."

Officer

MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD

Table 21: Making our voices heard KPIs

Table 21	Measure	'23	'24	Δ	Commentary
Making Our Voices Heard	% who disagree that police are respected by the public	85%	84%	0%pt ²⁰	The sense that the public does not respect the Police is widespread and stable
> Public View of Police	% who say treatment by public has a negative impact on morale	86%	85%	-1%pt	Most officers feel that how they are treated by the public is worsening their morale
> Govt View of Police	% who say treatment by government has a negative impact on morale	95%	93%	-2%pt	Almost every respondent said that the government negatively impacts their morale, although it has marginally improved since 2023

The focus of this section of the report is the 'Making our voices heard' subcategory of the PFEW2025 Member's Agenda, as well as the Public Agenda. From the survey, we use officers' view of their treatment, and whether they are respected by the public and the government as a proxy for the extent that the Police is successfully making its voice heard with policy and national debates. The results are clear that officers almost unanimously feel that the level of respect for the police is low, and that this has got worse since 2023, which was itself worse than 2022.

Actions on Making Our Voices Heard from PFEW2025 Strategy

Members' Agenda

1. We will undertake research to challenge the policy whereby a degree is the only route into policing.

Public Agenda

2. We will establish a Commission that will develop a vision for the future of policing based on what police officers see going wrong today and what will make for safer

²⁰ Note that this has been rounded to 0%pt from 0.1%pt, whilst the figures for 2023 and 2024 have been rounded from 84.5% and 84.4% respectively.

streets tomorrow. We will engage independent researchers to help undertake this project amongst rank and file officers who will 'tell it as it is'.

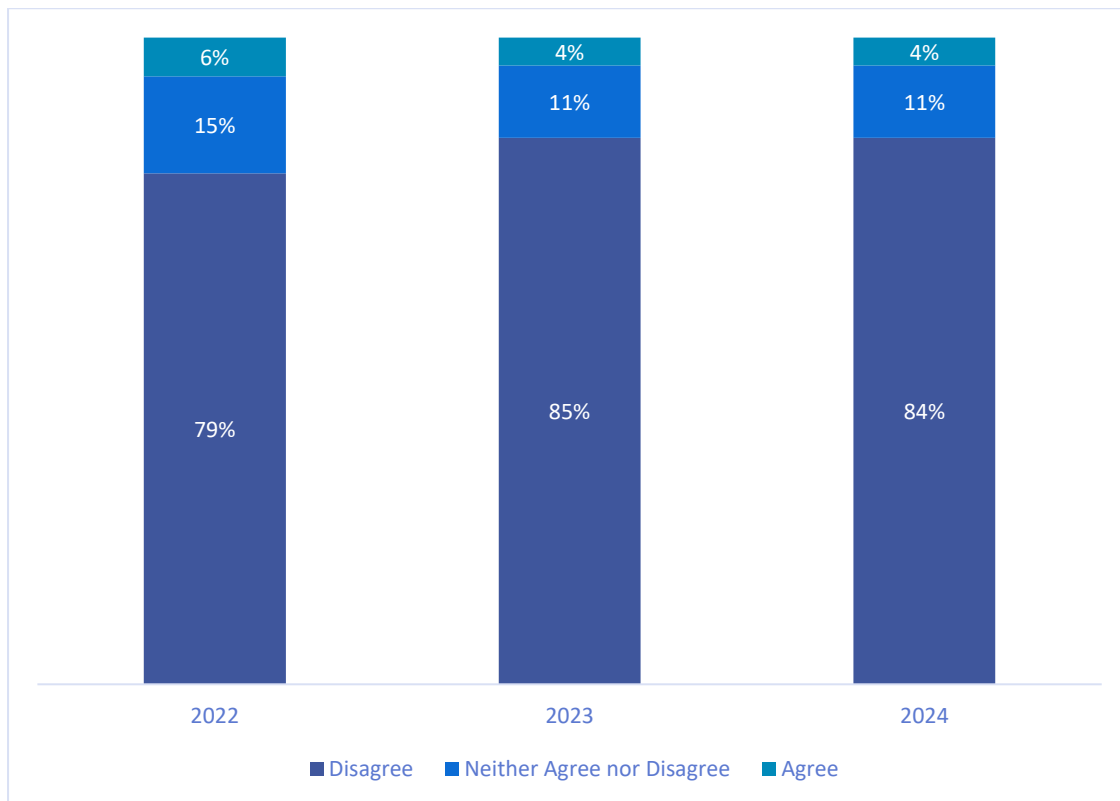
- 3. We will use this research to produce a major contribution to public debate. Region by Region we will engage the public and build alliances that will strengthen our influence on policy makers and politicians.*
- 4. Alongside this we will develop individual contributions to issues such as the use of tasers, knife crime, stop and search. We will be a 'go to' organisation on these issues of public concern.*

The survey results here are divided into two subsections: one relating how officers feel that the general public views the Police, and the other about the government's view of the Police.

THE PUBLIC'S VIEW OF THE POLICE

The perspective of officers has not shifted much since 2023. The proportion of respondents that 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that Police officers are respected by the public rose from 79% to 85% from 2022 to 2023, has stuck around that level (84%) in 2024. Only 4% of respondents 'agree' or 'strongly agree'.

Figure 32: Level of agreement that 'members of the Police are respected by the Public'



This sense that the public is poorly treating the police is having a significant impact on morale, second only to the government's treatment of policing of the options given – 85% of respondents say that the public's treatment is having a 'negative' or 'very negative' impact on morale.

Table 22: Impact of public treatment of Police on intention to leave the force

Impact of public treatment of Police on intention to leave the force	2022	2023	2024
% major impact	52%	62%	61%

This is also having a knock-on effect on staff retention. Three in five officers (61%) who are intending to leave the force within the next 2 years say that how the police are treated by the public is having a 'major effect' on their decision making.

THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW OF THE POLICE

There has been a marginal improvement in the extent to which officers feel that they are respected by the government – 92% 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' that they are respected, which is very high, but better than the 95% who did so in 2023. The government's treatment of officers is still the biggest factor in driving low morale – 93% say that it has had a 'negative' or 'very negative' effect. This flows through to their intention to stay in the force, with 74% of those planning on leaving policing within the next 2 years saying that the police's treatment by the government is having a 'major effect'.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS 2024

The challenges of policing are constantly evolving. To capture the impact on officers, a number of questions have been added to the Pay and Morale survey this year.

“As the PFEW, we want to continue to ask of our members questions that are relevant to their changing working environment. We are actively listening to member’s concerns and want to take forward changes that have positive impacts on officer wellbeing, broadening our approach to focussing on pay, policies, and pensions. That is why there have been added questions on things like the impact of social media, the impact of caring responsibilities on members, and the attractiveness of the detective career path. We feel these questions reflect the strong concerns our members have been sharing with us and will help shape future approaches to lobbying.”

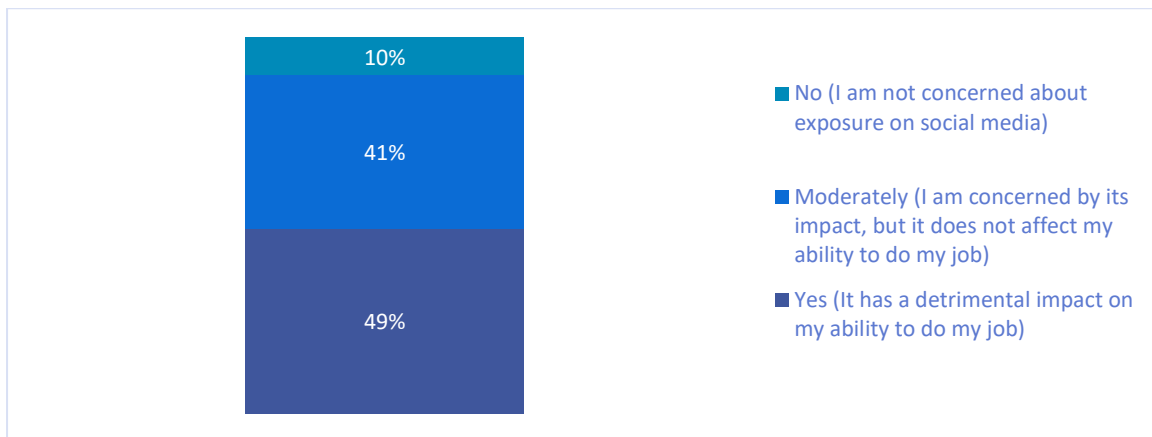
This section steps through these new sets of questions:

- Evolving aspects of policing
- Carers
- Detective career path

EVOLVING ASPECTS OF POLICING

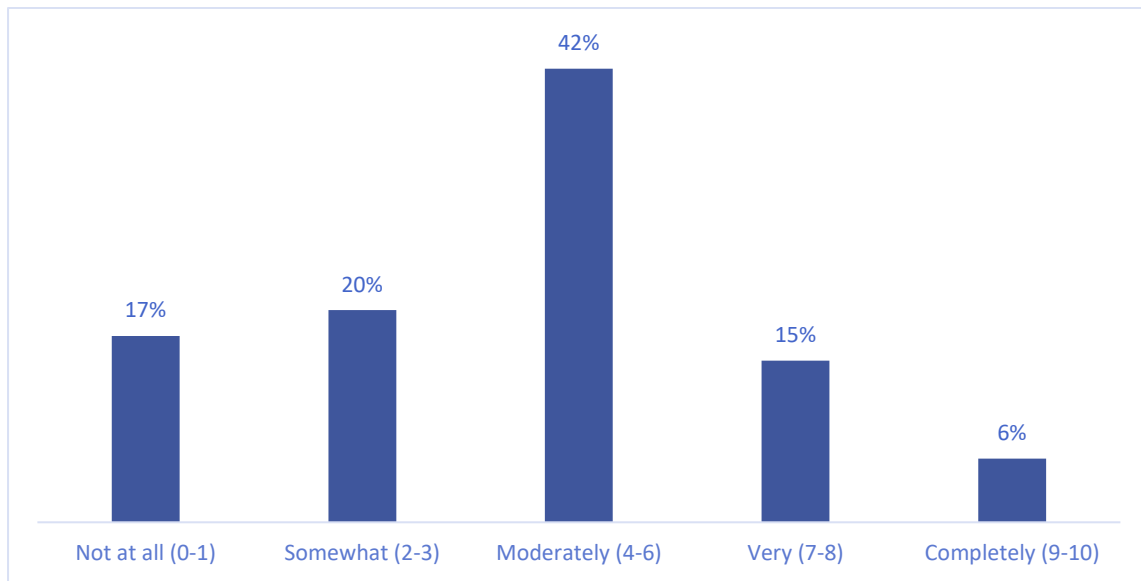
Social media has been an increasing risk for police officers, and has added complexity to the role. 49% of respondents said that it is having a detrimental impact on their ability to do the job, with a further 41% saying that they are concerned by its impact although it's not affecting their work.

Figure 33: Does social media have an impact on the way you are able to perform your role?



Summer 2024 also saw unrest across the UK. Only 6% of officers felt completely safe and supported during that period. 17% indicated that they were 'not at all supported' with 20% saying they felt only somewhat supported.

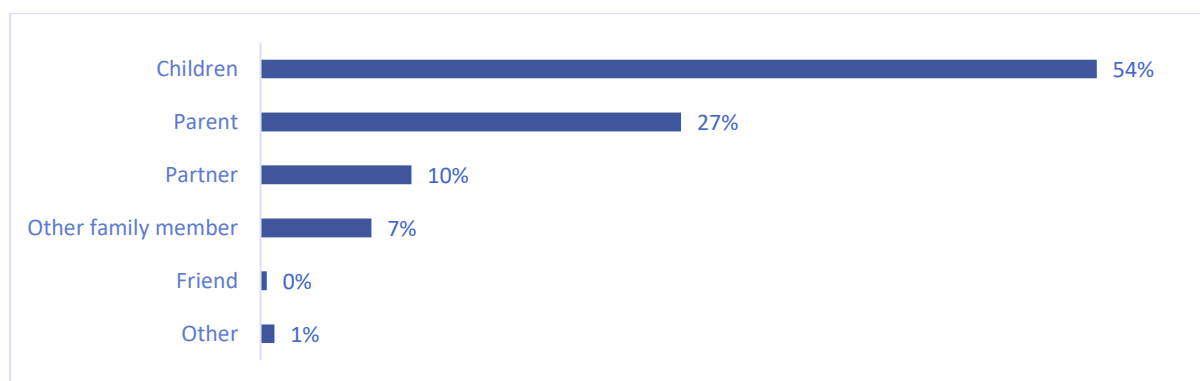
Figure 34: Given the recent unrest across the UK, how safe and supported did you feel whilst on duty?



IMPACT ON CARERS

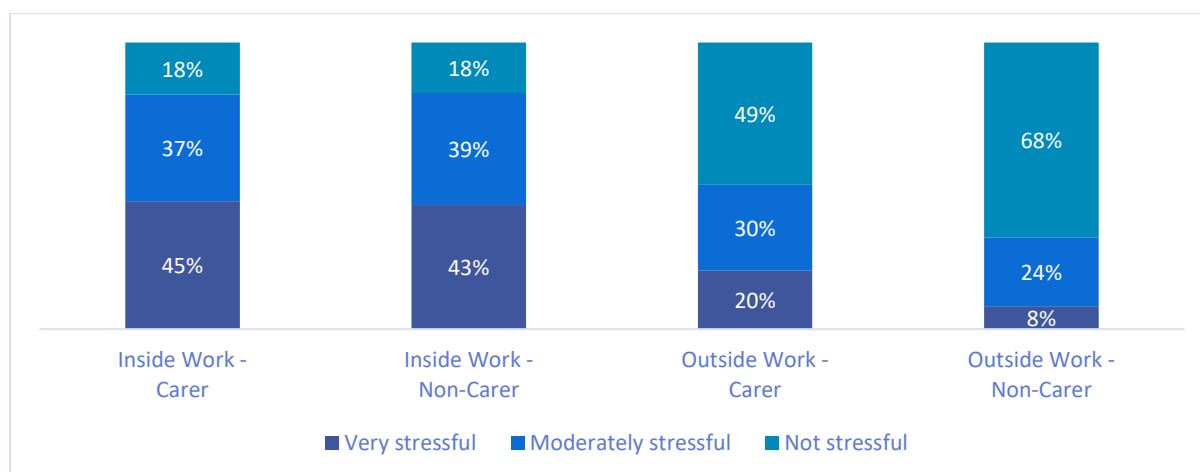
Some groups have things going on in their lives which can make the pressures of policing even more challenging. 16% of officers who responded to the survey are carers. Just over half of these are looking after children with additional needs. A quarter are caring for parents, with the rest helping partners, other family members and friends, as Figure 35 shows.

Figure 35: Who do you care for? [of the 16% that are carers]



Those with caring responsibilities find their jobs as stressful as their colleagues. 82% of both carers and non-carers find policing very or moderately stressful. There is a big difference in how stressful they find their personal lives, however a third of non-carers (32%) find their life outside of work stressful, whilst half (51%) of carers do.

Figure 36: Mental health and wellbeing



The result of this additional stress can be seen in higher rates of mental health problems. Whilst 80% of non-carers experienced stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with mental health in the last year, a shocking 87% of officers who are carers did. They are as likely to say that these challenges were caused or made worse by work (92% for carers, 93% for non-carers). A majority of carers (58%) have sought professional help for their mental health – that is a higher rate than for non-carers (45%).

Officers who are carers are less likely to receive adequate levels of help from their forces when they raise their mental health issues. Over a third (36%) of carers felt like they'd been supported well, compared to 40% of non-carers, whilst 36% of carers found their help to be poor, compared to 30% of non-carers.

DETECTIVE CAREER PATH

Around one in four (26%) of those completing the Pay and Morale survey were detectives. Of the remainder, just 10% would consider becoming a detective in the next 12-24 months, whilst 82% would not, and 8% do not know.

Respondents were asked to provide their reasons for not considering pursuing becoming a detective. For some, they were simply 'not interested'. Others said that they were happy in their current role or specialism, especially where they were planning on leaving the force anyway. Some people felt that an office-based role was not appealing to them.

A number of officers felt that they were not compensated appropriately for the extra work of becoming a detective, and the extra responsibilities in the role. There were widespread concerns about small teams and high workload.

Some officers felt that the culture within detectives is not appealing. They had a sense that detectives looked down at uniformed officers, and that they had "forgotten their roots".

Reason For Not Considering Becoming a Detective

High workload

"A detective appears to have a poor work life balance with working long hours for a remand etc."

Officer

"The role looks terrible, no work life balance, all detective units appear to be really struggling with burn out and enforced OT due to poor staffing. Nothing attractive about being a detective as far as I can see."

Officer

"Awful treatment of staff burned out overworked (PPU) and everyone that applies ends in PPU"

Officer

Some aspects of role not appealing

"Not interested in becoming a detective at this stage - far too much file prep and being restricted to an office role"

Officer

"I do not like many police processes connected with being a detective. Processes are unnecessarily complicated, lack of CPS lawyer access and CPS lawyer demands are frustrating. Niche is a very complicated system for preparing case files. Custody detention processes are overly complicated. Based on above, it is totally unlikely that I will ever become a detective."

Officer

"Although I love investigations, I do not enjoy long protracted investigations."

Officer

Pay not adequate

"A detective is required to study for an exam, more time and effort which is not recognised with any sort of payment"

Officer

"There is no pay incentive to become a Detective. The role is too demanding..."

Officer

"...The extra pay offered doesn't cover the extra workload and stress that would be created"

Officer

Culture doesn't appeal

"They forget their roots and don't help other departments and only think about themselves. They have an air about them where they think they are better than everyone else."

Officer

"The culture is poor, & they think they're superior to uniform."

Officer

CONCLUSION

The police force continues to suffer from very low morale – officers’ personal morale is low, and their perception of wider force morale is even worse. This is impacting staff retention, with nearly one in four officers considering leaving within the next two years. Life satisfaction is similarly poor, far below that of the general public. It is the government and public’s treatment of the police that is the biggest drain on morale.

Pay is a source of dissatisfaction for most respondents, especially in London. The cost of living crisis remains a challenge for many, with three in ten officers struggling to cover monthly essentials. Frustration with the changes to pensions remains, and more officers are dissatisfied with the professional development process.

Most officers feel that workloads are too high, with 86 per cent of respondents saying that they do not feel there is enough staff to manage the demands on their team. Excessive unpaid overtime is commonplace, as is the cancellation of rest days and annual leave going unused. Double crewing happens far less than officers would wish, and there are big gaps between how often respondents have access to equipment like spit guards and how often they would like to. The risks of social media are a drain on officers, and many felt inadequately supported during the unrest over the summer.

These factors are all contributing to a worrying picture of officers’ mental health – the vast majority of those who had faced mental health and wellbeing challenges in the last year said that work had had a negative impact. Access to different types of proactive and reactive support has improved, but the quality of support is still rated as being variable.

The Police service also faces issues of equality. Morale is lowest among Asian or Asian British officers, and those from mixed or multiple ethnic groups. People of colour in the force are far more likely to suffer from discrimination at work that impacts their mental health. Older officers are more likely to have lower morale, whilst stress induced by work is more common among younger ones.

Morale and life satisfaction remain critically low, with near-universal dissatisfaction on pay. Officers are frequently sacrificing rest days and working unpaid overtime, and yet having to do so without the equipment and procedures that they consider essential. Their mental health is being harmed, whilst support from management remains insufficient. These

findings underscore the urgent need to make progress on the PFEW2025 strategy and its forthcoming successor PFEW2028.