Pay and Morale Survey 2026 Dorset Police

Findings for officers in the force, compared with England and Wales

October 2026

01 About this report

Foreword

The Pay and Morale Survey is the Police Federation of England and Wales's annual survey of its members in the federated ranks (constables, sergeants, inspectors and chief inspectors). It asks officers about their pay and allowances, morale, wellbeing, workload, rest days and professional development, and is used to make the case for officers' pay and conditions.

This year, PFEW have commissioned the report to include more than it has in previous years. We want to impactfully demonstrate the impact of "the job" on officers in all aspects of their lives. For far too long, the real impact on the personal lives of officers has been overlooked. As PFEW, we want to start to shine a light on the true burden of responsibility policing has on the officers and their families as an extension of our "Copped Enough" campaign.

To do this, the 2026 report draws on more than the 2026 Pay and Morale Survey. It also uses a PF Global poll of PFEW members and ONS data to compare officers' experiences with those of the general public. Together, these sources give a wider picture of life in policing, including new evidence on officers' experiences of being a parent.

This report sets out the key findings for Dorset Police under five themes: pay, conditions and morale; confidence in policing; wellbeing and mental health; work-life balance; parenting and caring. Each finding is shown alongside the equivalent figure for England and Wales.

Data sources

- **Pay and Morale Survey 2026:** An online survey of 18,537 PFEW members in the federated ranks, conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales between 13 July and 8 August 2026.
- **PF Global poll of PFEW members:** An online poll of 4,158 PFEW members, conducted by PF Global on behalf of the Police Federation of England and Wales between 23 June and 6 July 2026.

169 officers from Dorset Police responded to the 2026 Pay and Morale Survey. A further 34 officers from the force responded to the PF Global poll of PFEW members.

© 2026 PF Global

Reading the figures

Force figures are based on all officers from the force who answered each question. England and Wales figures are weighted by force size. Figures based on fewer than 20 respondents are not reported, and figures based on 20 to 49 respondents are marked with an asterisk (*), shown with the number of respondents, and should be treated with caution. Headline figures are described as above or below England and Wales only where the difference is statistically significant (95% confidence); otherwise they are described as in line with the national average.

© 2026 PF Global

02 Pay, conditions and morale

Views of officers in Dorset Police on pay, workload and their overall satisfaction.

01

Satisfied with their life

47%

In line with the national average (42%)

02

Do not feel fairly paid for the stresses and strains of the job

93%

In line with the national average (93%)

03

Workload too high or much too high

61%

In line with the national average (63%)

Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents from the force answering each question (Dorset Police n=154–168; England and Wales n=17,028–18,509).

Key findings

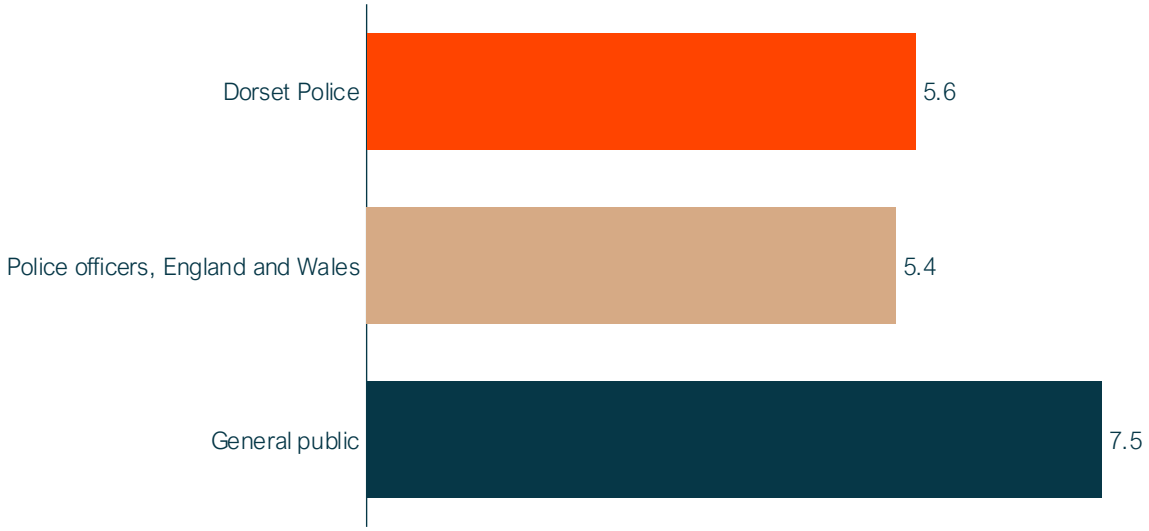
- 47% of respondents are **satisfied with their life** nowadays (scoring 7 or more out of 10) (England and Wales: 42%; see Figure 7).
- 24%* of respondents are **satisfied with their job** nowadays (scoring 7 or more out of 10) (England and Wales: 25%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 18%* of respondents **intend to resign** from the police service either within the next two years or as soon as they can (England and Wales: 21%; see Figure 8; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 74%* of respondents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their **overall remuneration** (pay and allowances) (England and Wales: 77%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 29%* of respondents struggle at times or frequently **cannot meet their household's financial needs** (England and Wales: 30%; see Figure 9; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 23% of respondents have had **at least one rest day cancelled** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 58%).
- 88% of respondents have had a **Performance and Development Review** (PDR) in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 91%; see Figure 10).
- 8% of respondents have **applied for promotion** to the next rank in the last year (England and Wales: 13%).

© 2026 PF Global

Officers in Dorset Police give their life satisfaction an average score of 5.6 out of 10, compared with 5.4 for police officers across England and Wales and 7.5 for the general public (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Life satisfaction compared with other groups

Average score, 0 to 10: overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?



Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents answering (Dorset Police n=154; England and Wales n=17,356). Comparator groups: General public: Office for National Statistics, Quarterly personal well-being estimates (Annual Population Survey), January to March 2026.

© 2026 PF Global

03 Confidence in policing

How officers in Dorset Police rate their force and how valued and respected they feel.

01

Do not feel valued in the police

82%*

In line with the national average (75%); small sample, n=34

02

Would not recommend joining the police

79%*

In line with the national average (77%); small sample, n=34

03

Do not feel respected by the Government

91%*

In line with the national average (93%); small sample, n=34

Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents from the force answering each question (Dorset Police n=34; England and Wales n=4,158).

Key findings

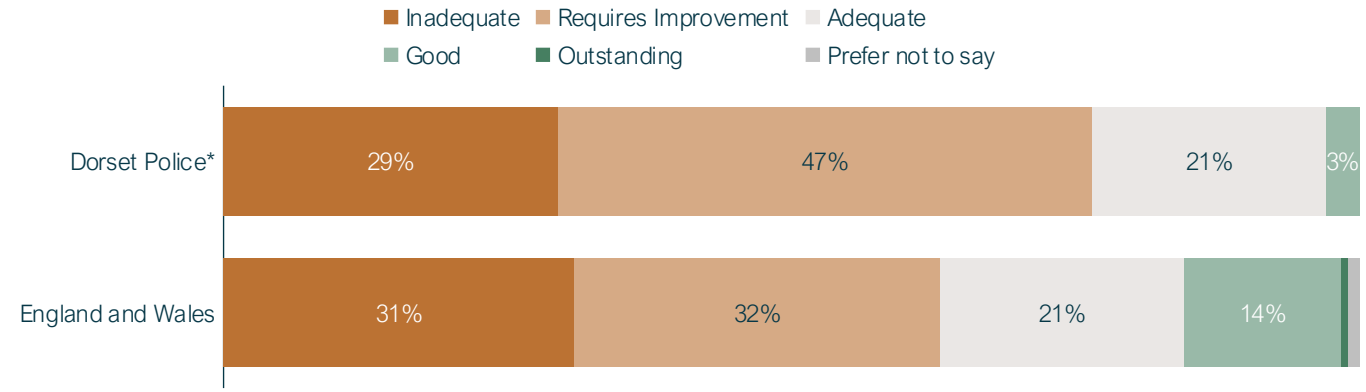
- 76%* of respondents **rate their force overall as inadequate or requiring improvement** (England and Wales: 63%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 85%* of respondents are **not confident in their force's ability to resource appropriately** for day-to-day operational demands (England and Wales: 63%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 91%* of respondents say their force **relies heavily on officer goodwill** to meet routine operational demands (England and Wales: 74%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 38%* of respondents say their team **has been fully staffed on very few or no shifts** in the last three months (England and Wales: 42%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 53%* of respondents **disagree that they are treated fairly** (England and Wales: 49%; see Figure 12; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 82%* of respondents **disagree that the police are respected by the public** (England and Wales: 82%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 35%* of respondents are **proud to be in the police** (England and Wales: 41%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 2 shows how officers in Dorset Police rate their own force, alongside the picture across England and Wales.

Figure 2: How officers rate their own force

Using the scale below, how would you rate the force you are a part of?

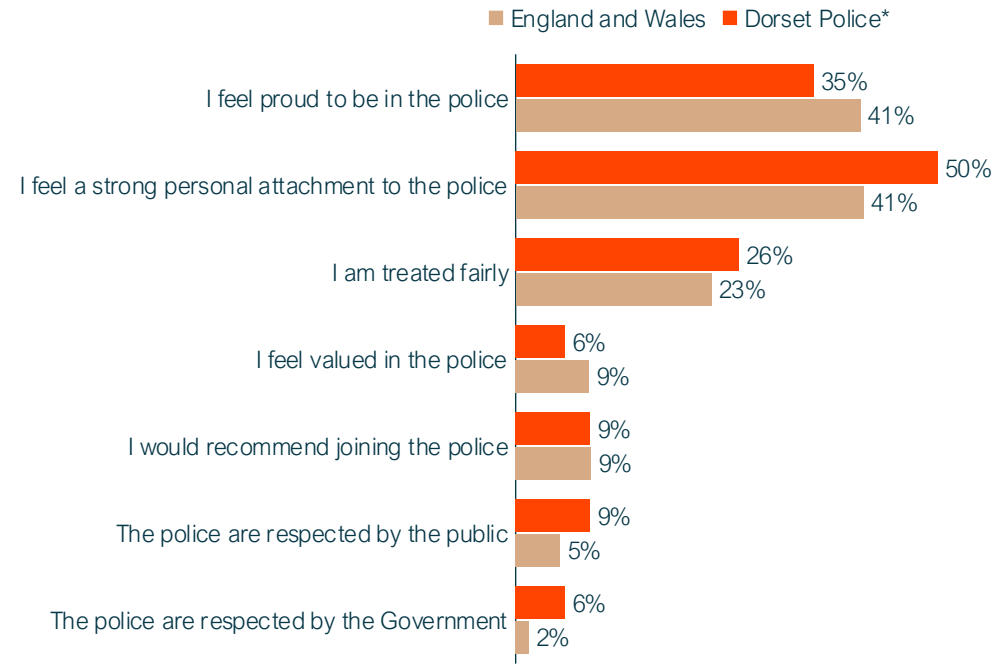


Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents answering (Dorset Police n=34; England and Wales n=4,158). Each segment is rounded separately, so segments may not add up exactly to the figures in the text.

Figure 3 compares officers in Dorset Police with officers across England and Wales.

Figure 3: How officers feel about the police

% who agree with each statement



Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents answering (Dorset Police n=34; England and Wales n=4,158).

© 2026 PF Global

04 Wellbeing and mental health

Stress, mental health and safety on duty among officers in Dorset Police.

01

Find their job very or extremely stressful

32%

11 points below England and Wales (43%)

02

Experienced stress, low mood or anxiety in the last 12 months

81%

In line with the national average (78%)

03

Too fatigued to carry out duties

66%

In line with the national average (66%)

Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents from the force answering each question (Dorset Police n=167; England and Wales n=18,019–18,033).

Key findings

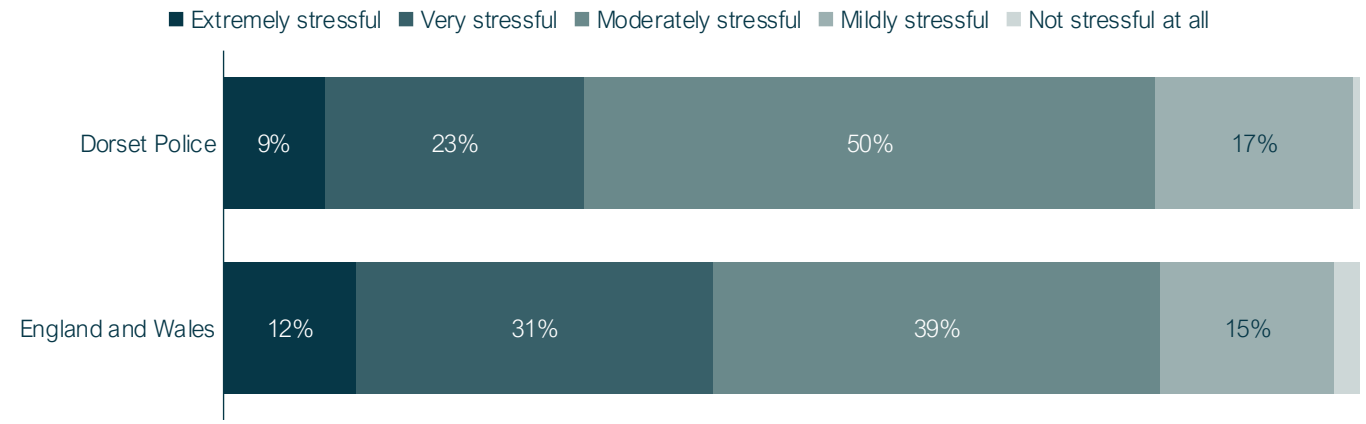
- 32% of respondents find their job **very or extremely stressful** (England and Wales: 43%; see Figure 11).
- 34% of respondents have **used their leave entitlement to take time off because of their mental health** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 40%).
- 52% of respondents have **sought help for stress, low mood, anxiety or other mental health difficulties** (England and Wales: 49%).
- 82%* of respondents **rate their force's support for officers and their wellbeing as inadequate** or requiring improvement (England and Wales: 72%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 59%* of respondents have **felt unsafe on duty because of staffing levels** in the last three months (England and Wales: 55%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 38%* of respondents have been **physically attacked by a member of the public** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 44%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 82% of respondents **do not have access to double crewing** at all times while on duty (excluding those for whom it is not applicable) (England and Wales: 75%).
- 10% of respondents have **suffered one or more injuries requiring medical attention** as a result of work-related violence in the last year (England and Wales: 13%).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 4 shows how officers in Dorset Police describe the stress of their job, compared with officers across England and Wales.

Figure 4: How stressful officers find their job

In general, how do you find your job?



Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents answering (Dorset Police n=167; England and Wales n=18,033). Each segment is rounded separately, so segments may not add up exactly to the figures in the text.

© 2026 PF Global

05 Work-life balance

How the job affects the lives of officers in Dorset Police outside work.

01

Often or always pressured to work long hours

28%

In line with the national average (31%)

02

Had annual leave refused

82%

20 points above England and Wales (62%)

03

Had their roster changed

61%

10 points below England and Wales (71%)

Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents from the force answering each question (Dorset Police n=142–163; England and Wales n=15,634–17,508).

Key findings

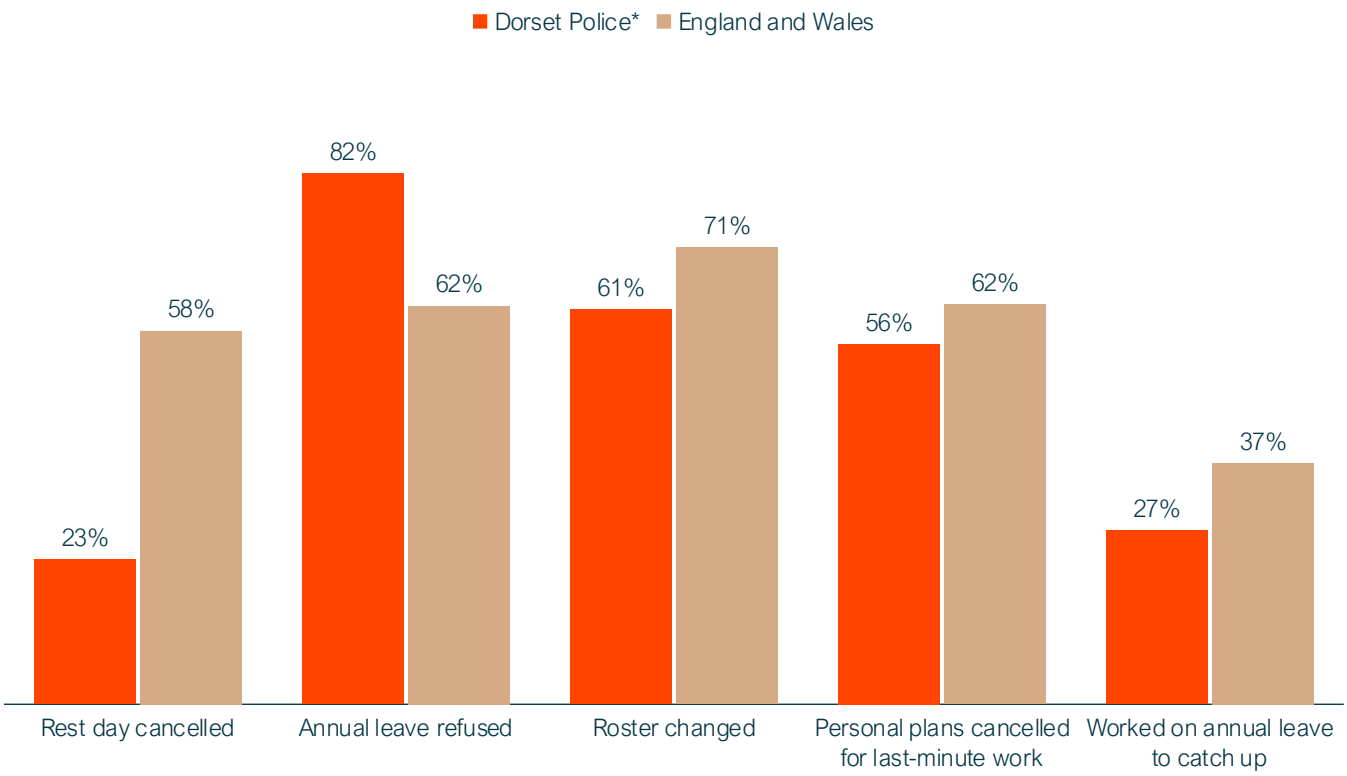
- 75% of respondents agree they have been so **fatigued it has interfered with their family or social life** in the last month (England and Wales: 76%).
- 56%* of respondents have had to **cancel personal plans due to last-minute work requirements** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 62%; small sample: Dorset Police n=34).
- 19% of respondents **often or always take work home** that cannot be completed in normal working hours (England and Wales: 30%).
- 27% of respondents have **worked during annual leave to catch up** with work at least sometimes (England and Wales: 37%).
- 8% of respondents find their **life outside of work very or extremely stressful** (England and Wales: 10%).
- 26% of respondents have a **flexible working arrangement** in place (England and Wales: 18%).
- 85% of respondents who work overtime do some **unpaid overtime** in an average four-week period (England and Wales: 81%).
- 28% of respondents who work night shifts have worked **more than four consecutive night shifts** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 32%).
- 10% of respondents have had at least one **free day cancelled** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 26%).
- 11% of respondents have had their **roster changed more than 10 times** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 17%).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 5 compares officers in Dorset Police with officers across England and Wales.

Figure 5: How often the job cuts into officers' own time

% who have experienced each in the last 12 months



Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026), base: all respondents answering (Dorset Police n=142–163; England and Wales n=15,634–17,511); except cancelled personal plans: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026), base: all respondents (Dorset Police n=34; England and Wales n=4,158).

© 2026 PF Global

06 Parenting and caring

How parenting and caring responsibilities affect officers in Dorset Police.

01

Are parents

75%

12 points above England and Wales (63%)

02

Parents whose fatigue has interfered with family life

75%

In line with the national average (74%)

03

Parents who have changed role or team to meet their obligations as a parent

55%

In line with the national average (55%)

Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: are parents, all respondents from the force answering (Dorset Police n=169; England and Wales n=18,518); other figures, parents from the force answering each question (Dorset Police n=93–124; England and Wales n=8,755–11,316).

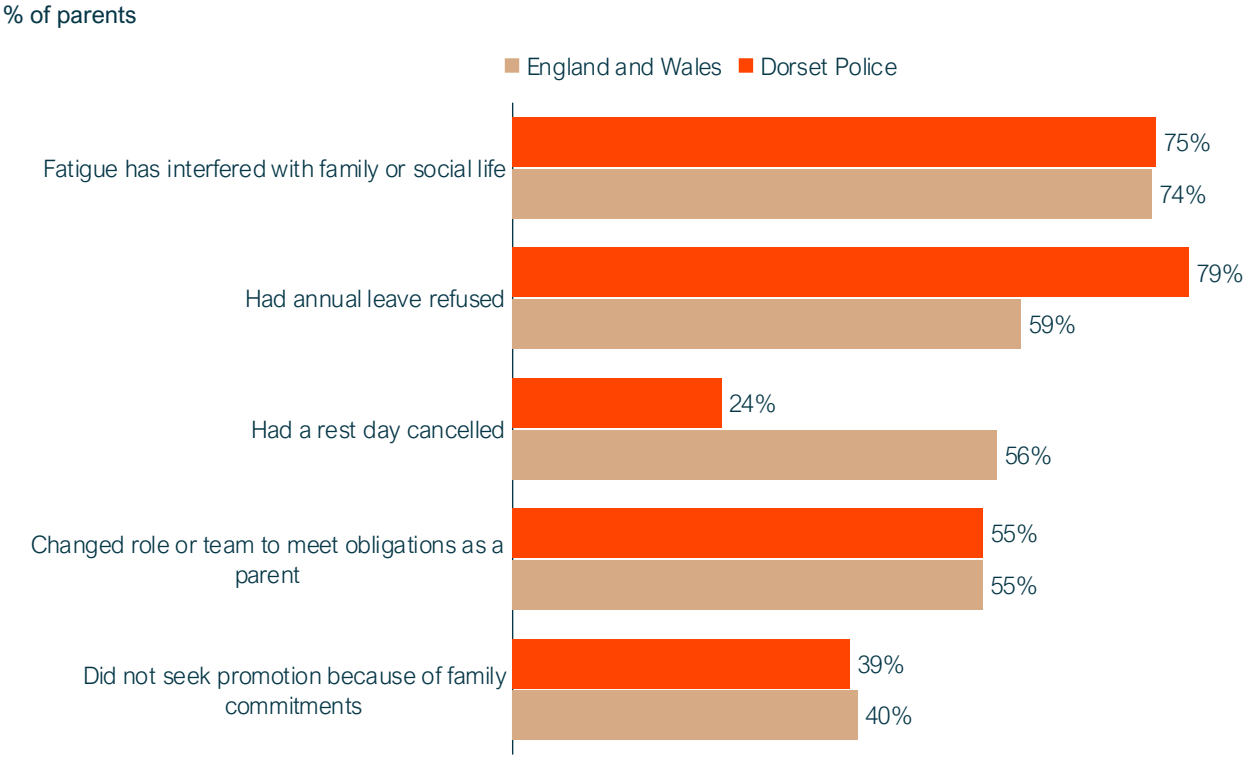
Key findings

- 83%* of **mothers** have had to change job roles or teams to meet their obligations as a parent (England and Wales: 71%; small sample: Dorset Police n=24).
- 45% of **fathers** have had to change job roles or teams to meet their obligations as a parent (England and Wales: 49%).
- 39% of parents who did not apply for promotion in the last year say they have **too many commitments in their family or personal life** (England and Wales: 40%).
- 79% of parents have had a **request for annual leave refused** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 59%).
- 24% of parents have had **at least one rest day cancelled** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 56%).
- 31% of parents have a **flexible working arrangement** in place (England and Wales: 25%).
- 30% of parents who use childcare rely mainly on **formal childcare settings** such as nurseries or school clubs (England and Wales: 30%).
- 12% of respondents are **carers for someone with a long-term care need** (England and Wales: 13%).
- 45%* of carers have **needed to take leave to provide or arrange care** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 64%; small sample: Dorset Police n=20).
- 50%* of carers say the demands of caring have led to them **developing a physical or mental health condition** (England and Wales: 36%; small sample: Dorset Police n=20).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 6 compares officers in Dorset Police who are parents with parents across England and Wales.

Figure 6: How the job affects officers who are parents



Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: parents answering each question (promotion: parents who did not apply for promotion in the last year) (Dorset Police n=93–124; England and Wales n=8,755–11,316).

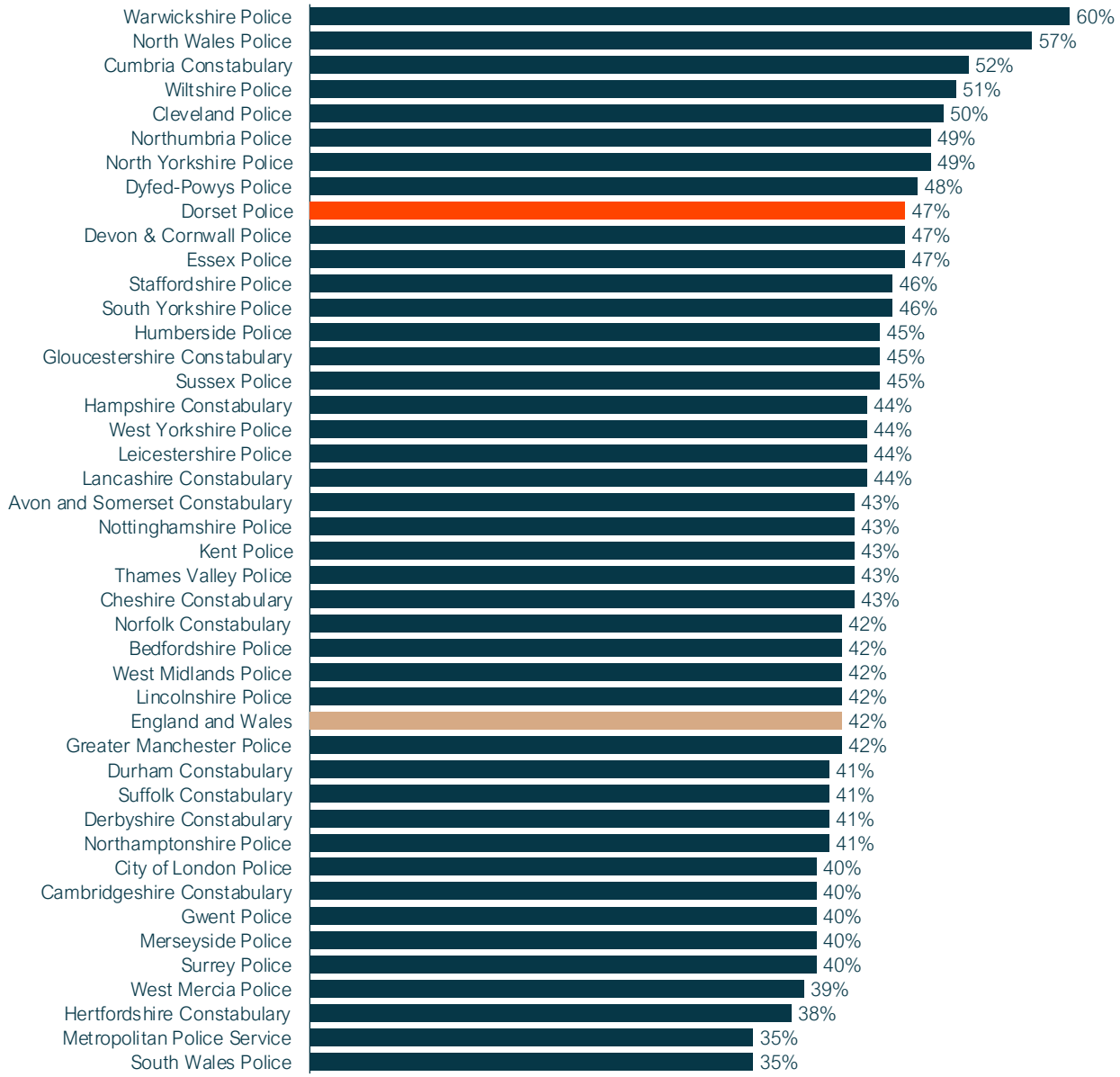
© 2026 PF Global

07 Comparison with other forces

The figures below compare Dorset Police with other forces on six key measures, ranked from highest to lowest. Forces with fewer than 20 respondents are not shown; * marks a base of 20 to 49.

Figure 7: Satisfied with their life (7-10 out of 10)

% of respondents, by force. Dorset Police highlighted in orange; England and Wales in copper

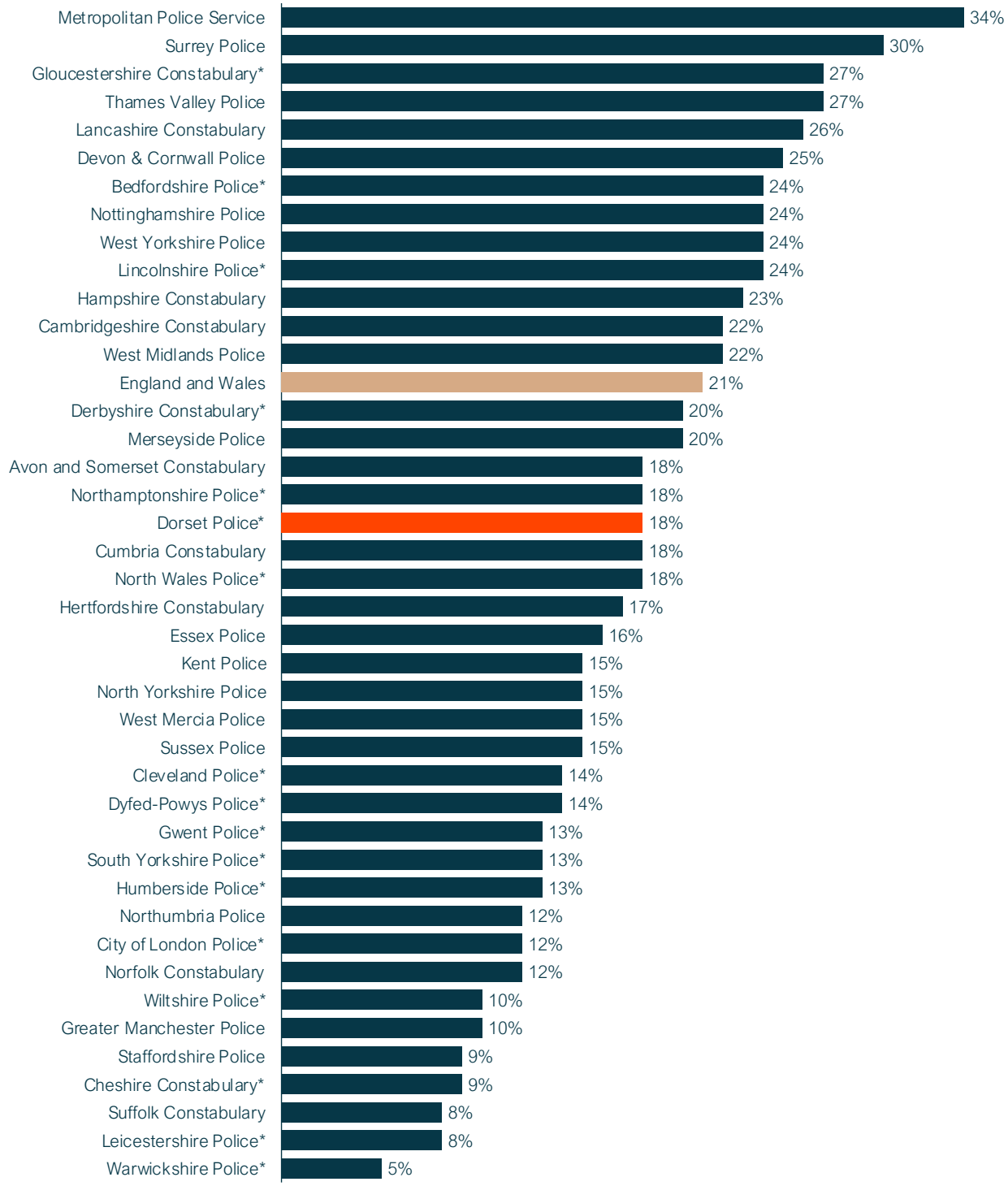


Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents in each force (forces shown n=81–3,717; England and Wales n=17,356).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 8: Intend to resign within two years or as soon as they can

% of respondents, by force. Dorset Police highlighted in orange; England and Wales in copper

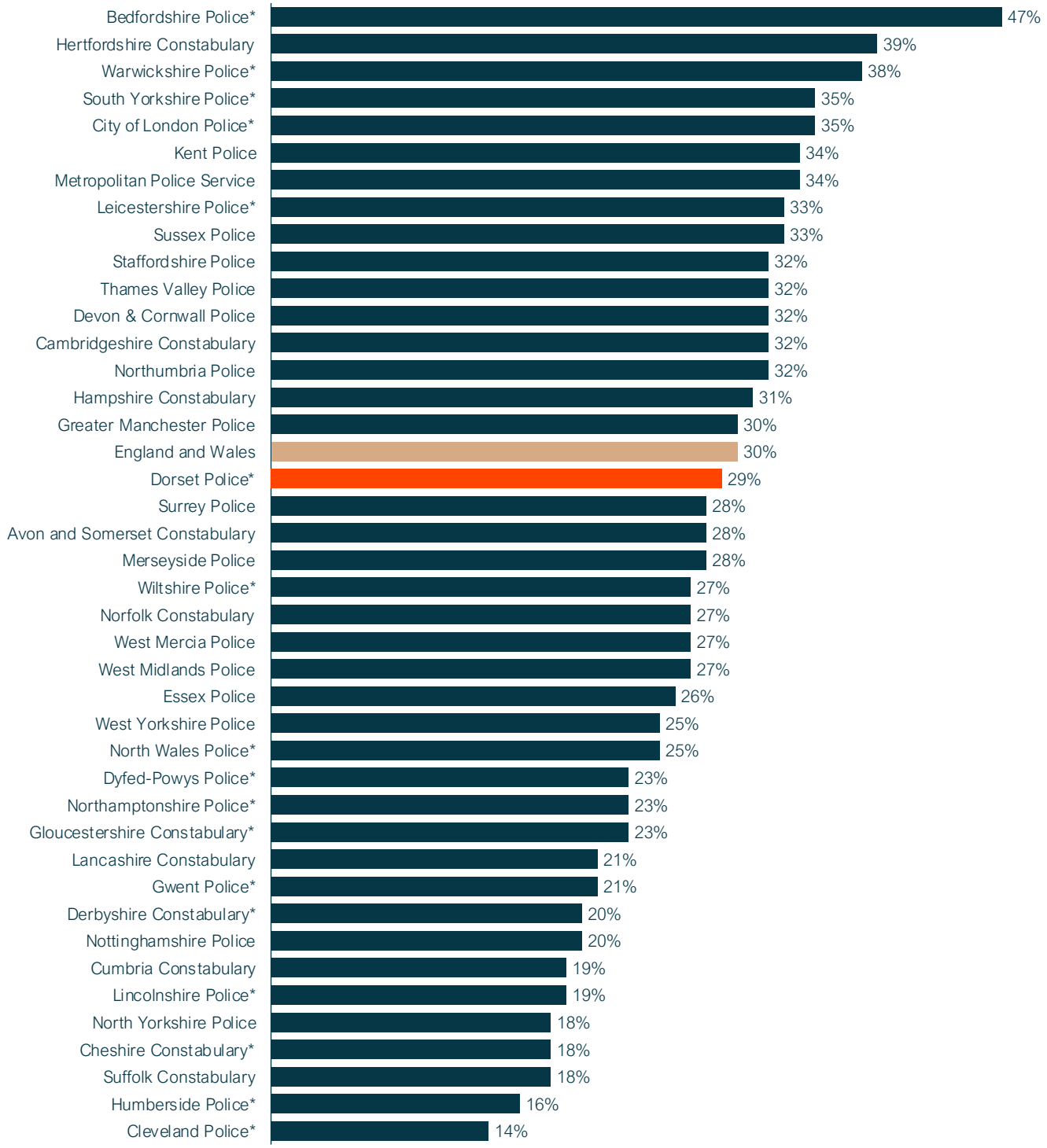


Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents in each force (forces shown n=21–1,101; England and Wales n=4,158); * base 20-49; 2 forces with fewer than 20 respondents are not shown.

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 9: Struggle to meet their financial needs

% of respondents, by force. Dorset Police highlighted in orange; England and Wales in copper

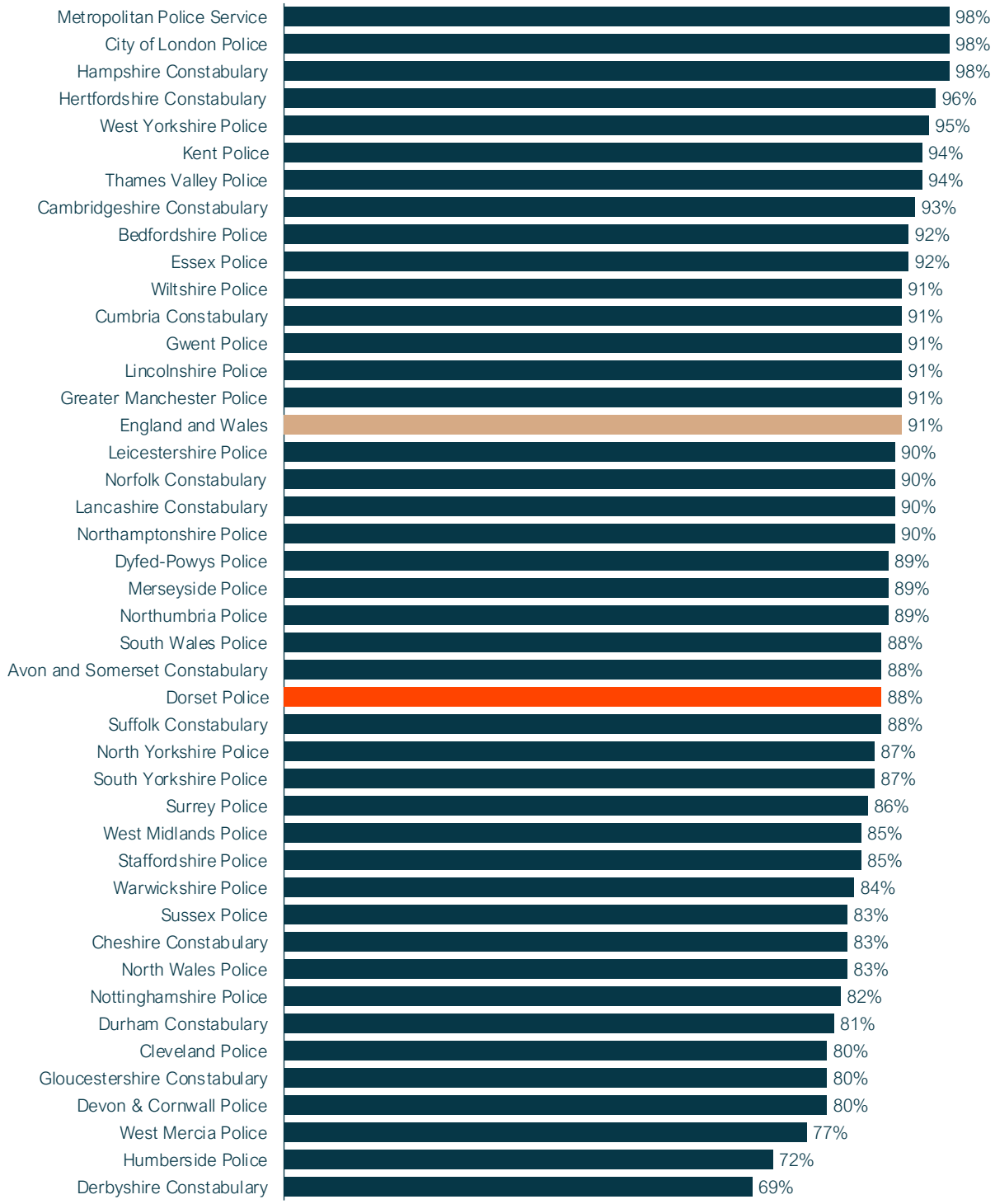


Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents in each force (forces shown n=21–1,101; England and Wales n=4,158); * base 20-49; 2 forces with fewer than 20 respondents are not shown.

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 10: Had a PDR in the last 12 months

% of respondents, by force. Dorset Police highlighted in orange; England and Wales in copper

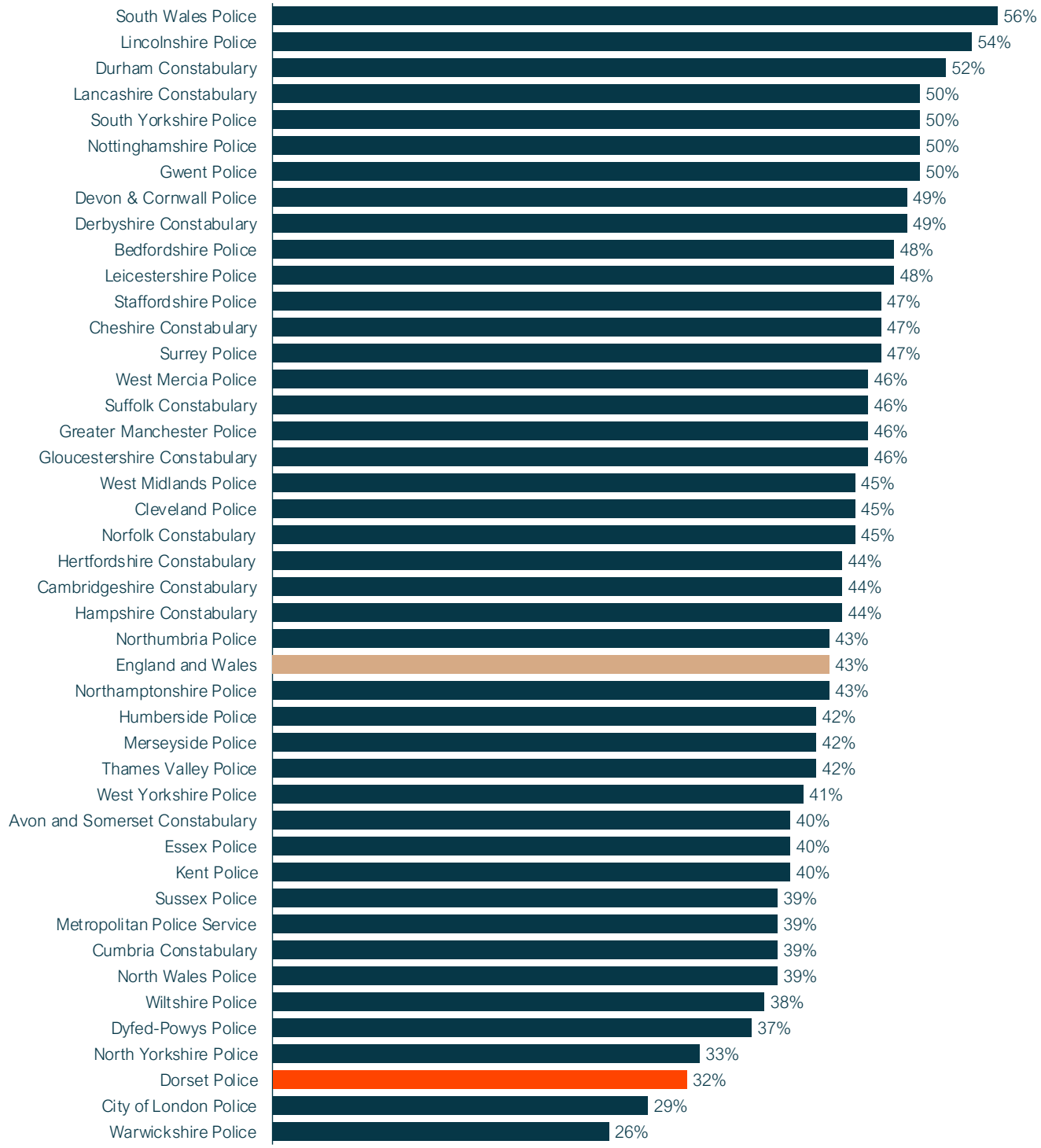


Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents in each force (forces shown n=85–3,822; England and Wales n=16,699).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 11: Find their job very or extremely stressful

% of respondents, by force. Dorset Police highlighted in orange; England and Wales in copper

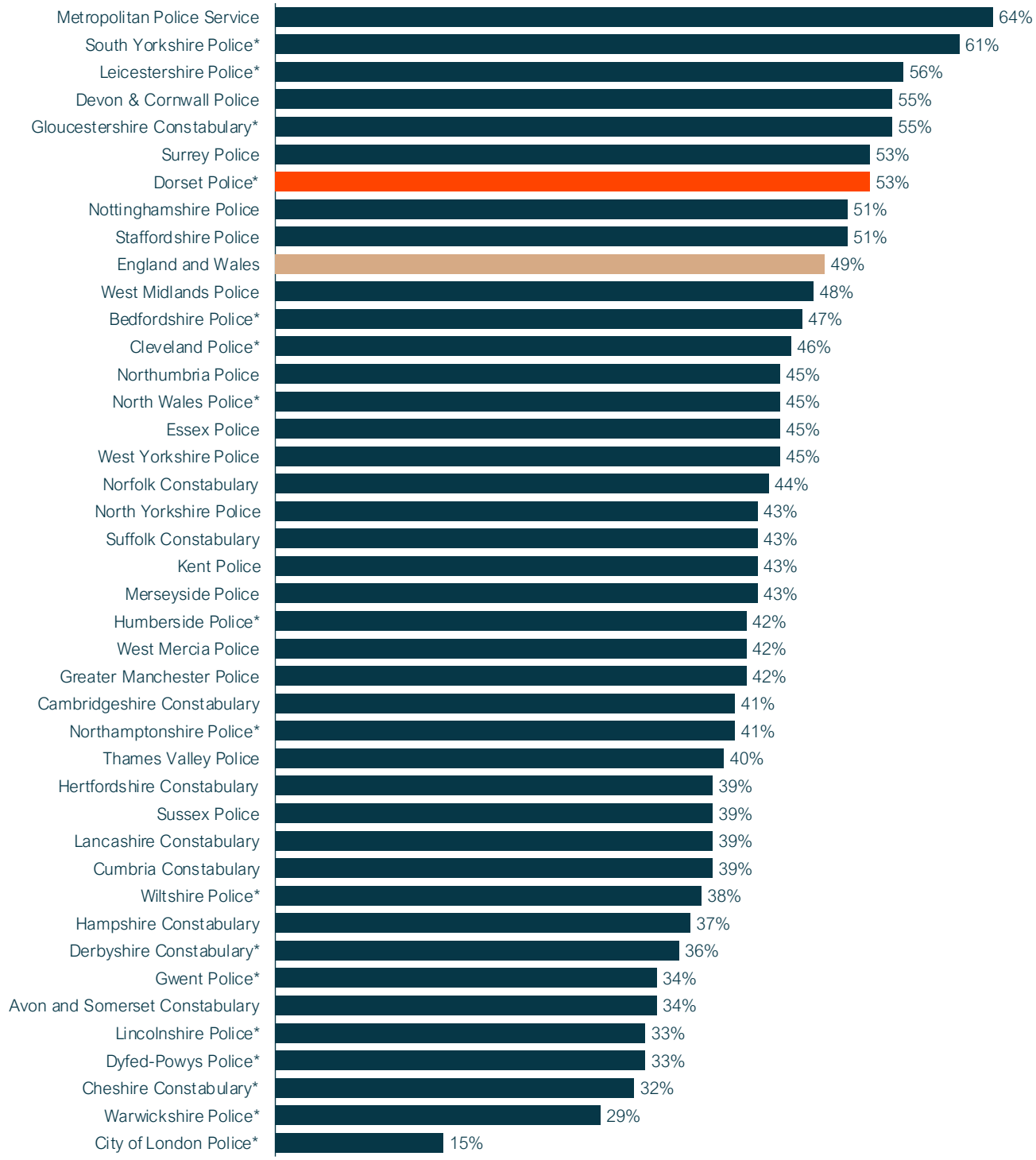


Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents in each force (forces shown n=84–3,895; England and Wales n=18,033).

© 2026 PF Global

Figure 12: Do not feel fairly treated

% of respondents, by force. Dorset Police highlighted in orange; England and Wales in copper



Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents in each force (forces shown n=21–1,101; England and Wales n=4,158); * base 20-49; 2 forces with fewer than 20 respondents are not shown.

© 2026 PF Global