Pay and Morale Survey 2026 Essex 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 Essex 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.

419 officers from Essex Police responded to the 2026 Pay and Morale Survey. A further 107 officers from the force responded to the PF Global poll of PFEW members.

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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.

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02 Pay, conditions and morale

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

01

Satisfied with their life

47%

5 points above England and Wales (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

54%

9 points below England and Wales (63%)

Source: PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2026 (fieldwork 13 July to 8 August 2026). Base: all respondents from the force answering each question (Essex Police n=387–419; 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).
- 22% of respondents are **satisfied with their job** nowadays (scoring 7 or more out of 10) (England and Wales: 25%).
- 16% 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).
- 75% of respondents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their **overall remuneration** (pay and allowances) (England and Wales: 77%).
- 26% of respondents struggle at times or frequently **cannot meet their household's financial needs** (England and Wales: 30%; see Figure 9).
- 44% of respondents have had **at least one rest day cancelled** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 58%).
- 92% of respondents have had a **Performance and Development Review** (PDR) in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 91%; see Figure 10).
- 13% of respondents have **applied for promotion** to the next rank in the last year (England and Wales: 13%).

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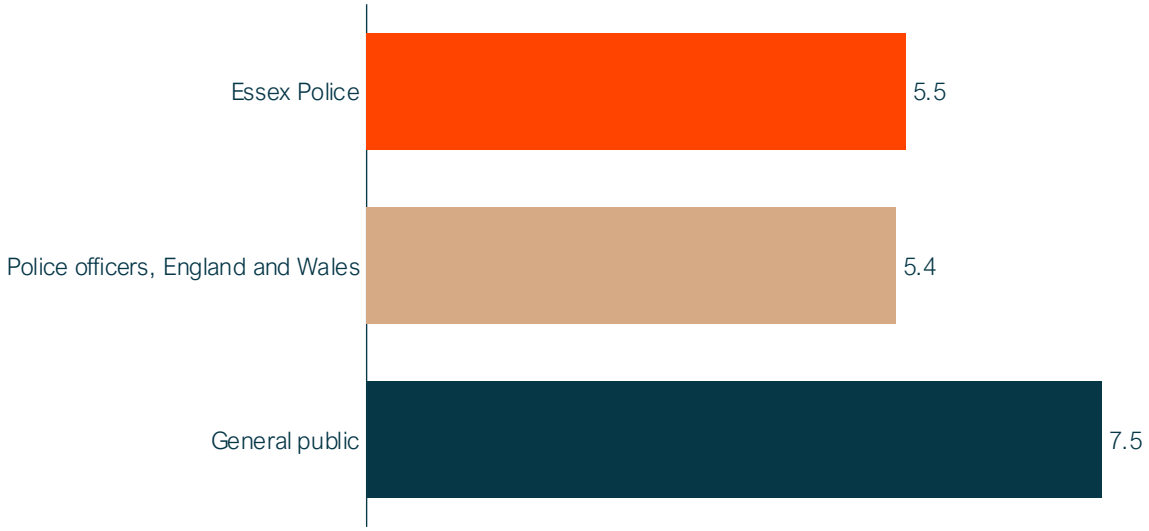
Officers in Essex Police give their life satisfaction an average score of 5.5 out of 10, compared with 5.4 for police officers across England and Wales and 7.5 for the general public (Figure 1).

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 (Essex Police n=397; 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.

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03 Confidence in policing

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

01

Do not feel valued in the police

75%

In line with the national average (75%)

02

Would not recommend joining the police

73%

In line with the national average (77%)

03

Do not feel respected by the Government

91%

In line with the national average (93%)

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 (Essex Police n=107; England and Wales n=4,158).

Key findings

- 65% of respondents **rate their force overall as inadequate or requiring improvement** (England and Wales: 63%).
- 70% of respondents are **not confident in their force's ability to resource appropriately** for day-to-day operational demands (England and Wales: 63%).
- 73% of respondents say their force **relies heavily on officer goodwill** to meet routine operational demands (England and Wales: 74%).
- 49% of respondents say their team **has been fully staffed on very few or no shifts** in the last three months (England and Wales: 42%).
- 45% of respondents **disagree that they are treated fairly** (England and Wales: 49%; see Figure 12).
- 79% of respondents **disagree that the police are respected by the public** (England and Wales: 82%).
- 48% of respondents are **proud to be in the police** (England and Wales: 41%).

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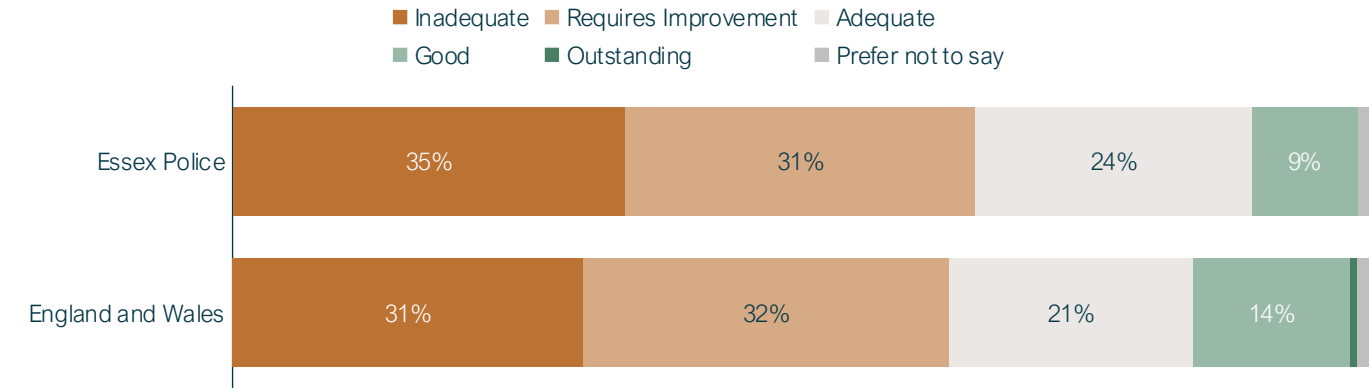
Figure 2 shows how officers in Essex Police rate their own force, alongside the picture across England and Wales.

Figure 2: How officers rate their own force

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

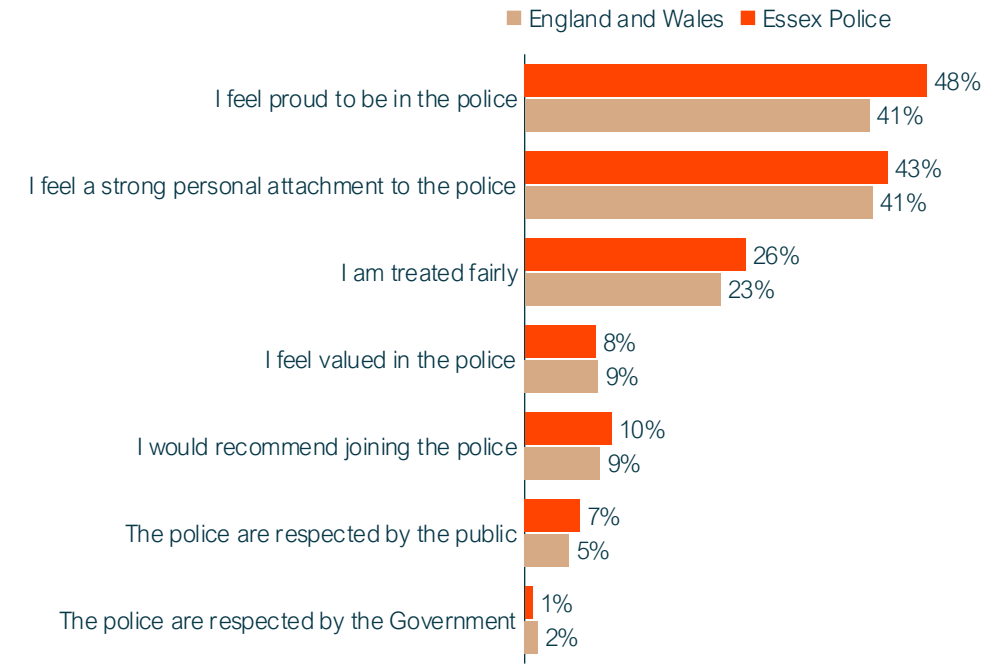


Source: PF Global poll of PFEW members, commissioned by PFEW (fieldwork 23 June to 6 July 2026). Base: all respondents answering (Essex Police n=107; England and Wales n=4,158). Each segment is rounded separately, so segments may not add up exactly to the figures in the text.

Figure 3 compares officers in Essex 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 (Essex Police n=107; England and Wales n=4,158).

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04 Wellbeing and mental health

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

01

Find their job very or extremely stressful

40%

In line with the national average (43%)

02

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

83%

5 points above England and Wales (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 (Essex Police n=412–413; England and Wales n=18,019–18,033).

Key findings

- 40% of respondents find their job **very or extremely stressful** (England and Wales: 43%; see Figure 11).
- 42% 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%).
- 54% of respondents have **sought help for stress, low mood, anxiety or other mental health difficulties** (England and Wales: 49%).
- 60% of respondents **rate their force's support for officers and their wellbeing as inadequate** or requiring improvement (England and Wales: 72%).
- 64% of respondents have **felt unsafe on duty because of staffing levels** in the last three months (England and Wales: 55%).
- 49% of respondents have been **physically attacked by a member of the public** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 44%).
- 71% 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%).
- 8% 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%).

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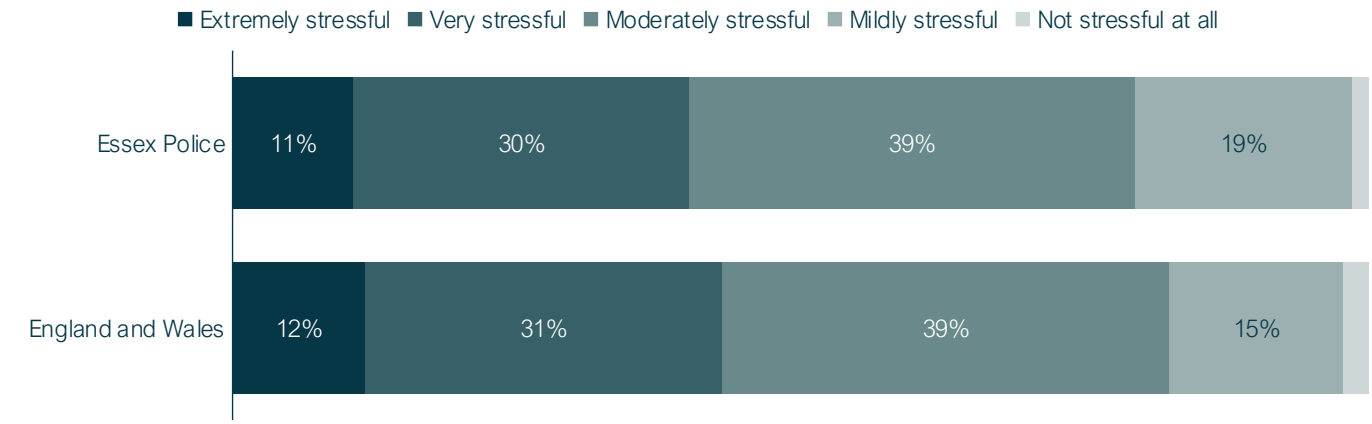
Figure 4 shows how officers in Essex Police describe the stress of their job, compared with officers across England and Wales.

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 (Essex Police n=413; England and Wales n=18,033). Each segment is rounded separately, so segments may not add up exactly to the figures in the text.

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05 Work-life balance

How the job affects the lives of officers in Essex 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

51%

11 points below England and Wales (62%)

03

Had their roster changed

53%

18 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 (Essex Police n=352–399; England and Wales n=15,634–17,508).

Key findings

- 73% 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%).
- 62% of respondents have had to **cancel personal plans due to last-minute work requirements** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 62%).
- 25% of respondents **often or always take work home** that cannot be completed in normal working hours (England and Wales: 30%).
- 30% of respondents have **worked during annual leave to catch up** with work at least sometimes (England and Wales: 37%).
- 10% of respondents find their **life outside of work very or extremely stressful** (England and Wales: 10%).
- 23% 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%).
- 12% of respondents who work night shifts have worked **more than four consecutive night shifts** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 32%).
- 16% of respondents have had at least one **free day cancelled** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 26%).
- 9% of respondents have had their **roster changed more than 10 times** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 17%).

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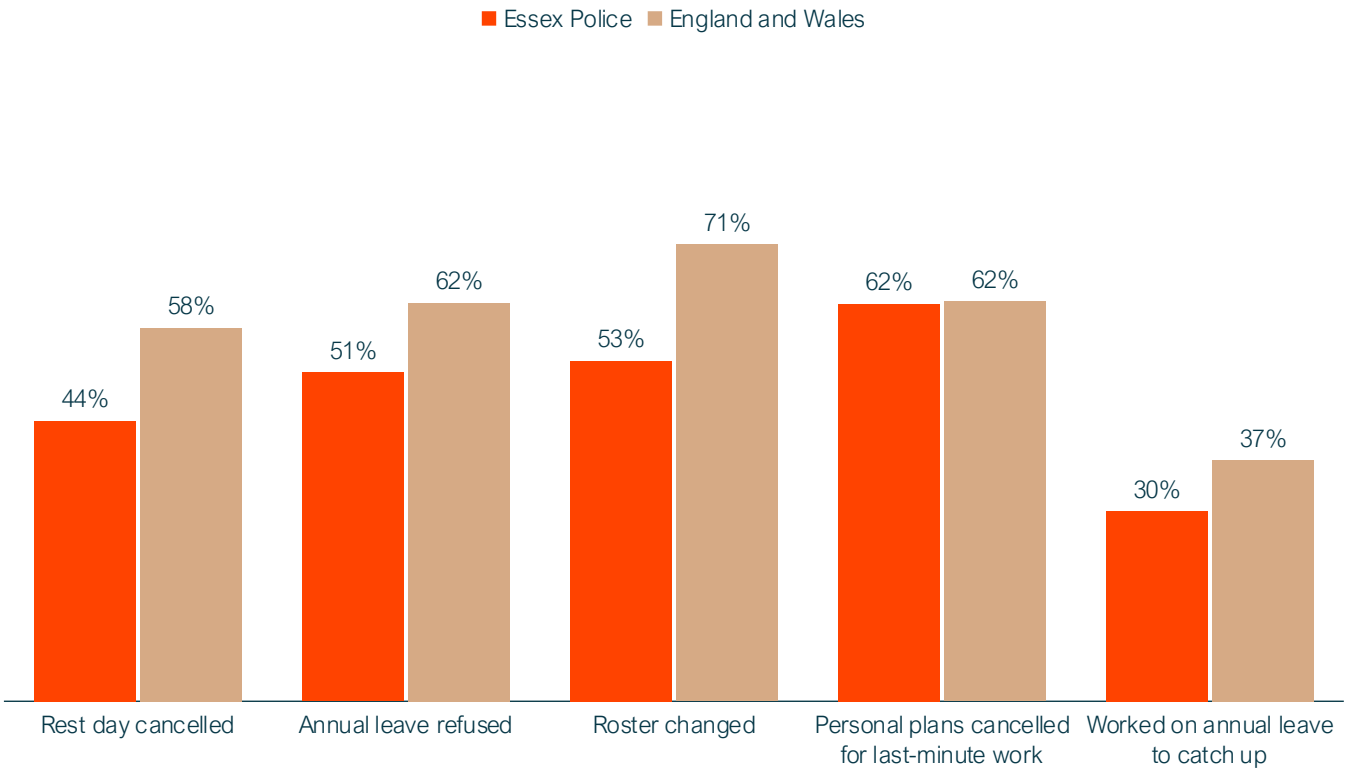
Figure 5 compares officers in Essex Police with officers across England and Wales.

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 (Essex Police n=352–400; 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 (Essex Police n=107; England and Wales n=4,158).

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06 Parenting and caring

How parenting and caring responsibilities affect officers in Essex Police.

01

Are parents

65%

In line with the national average (63%)

02

Parents whose fatigue has interfered with family life

73%

In line with the national average (74%)

03

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

49%

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 (Essex Police n=418; England and Wales n=18,518); other figures, parents from the force answering each question (Essex Police n=206–266; England and Wales n=8,755–11,316).

Key findings

- 69% of **mothers** have had to change job roles or teams to meet their obligations as a parent (England and Wales: 71%).
- 39% of **fathers** have had to change job roles or teams to meet their obligations as a parent (England and Wales: 49%).
- 42% 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%).
- 47% of parents have had a **request for annual leave refused** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 59%).
- 39% 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%).
- 26% of parents who use childcare rely mainly on **formal childcare settings** such as nurseries or school clubs (England and Wales: 30%).
- 11% of respondents are **carers for someone with a long-term care need** (England and Wales: 13%).
- 63%* of carers have **needed to take leave to provide or arrange care** in the last 12 months (England and Wales: 64%; small sample: Essex Police n=48).
- 42%* of carers say the demands of caring have led to them **developing a physical or mental health condition** (England and Wales: 36%; small sample: Essex Police n=48).

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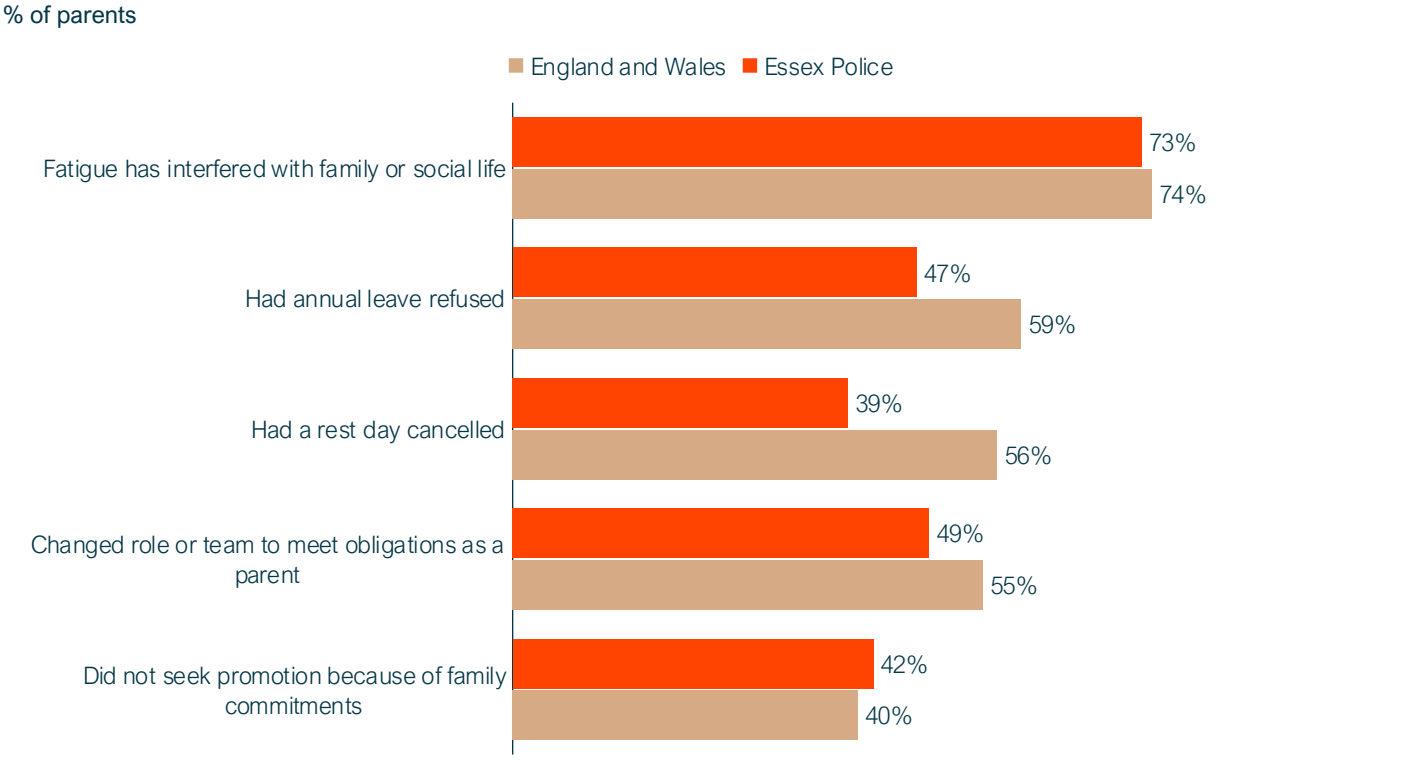
Figure 6 compares officers in Essex Police who are parents with parents across England and Wales.

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) (Essex Police n=206–266; England and Wales n=8,755–11,316).

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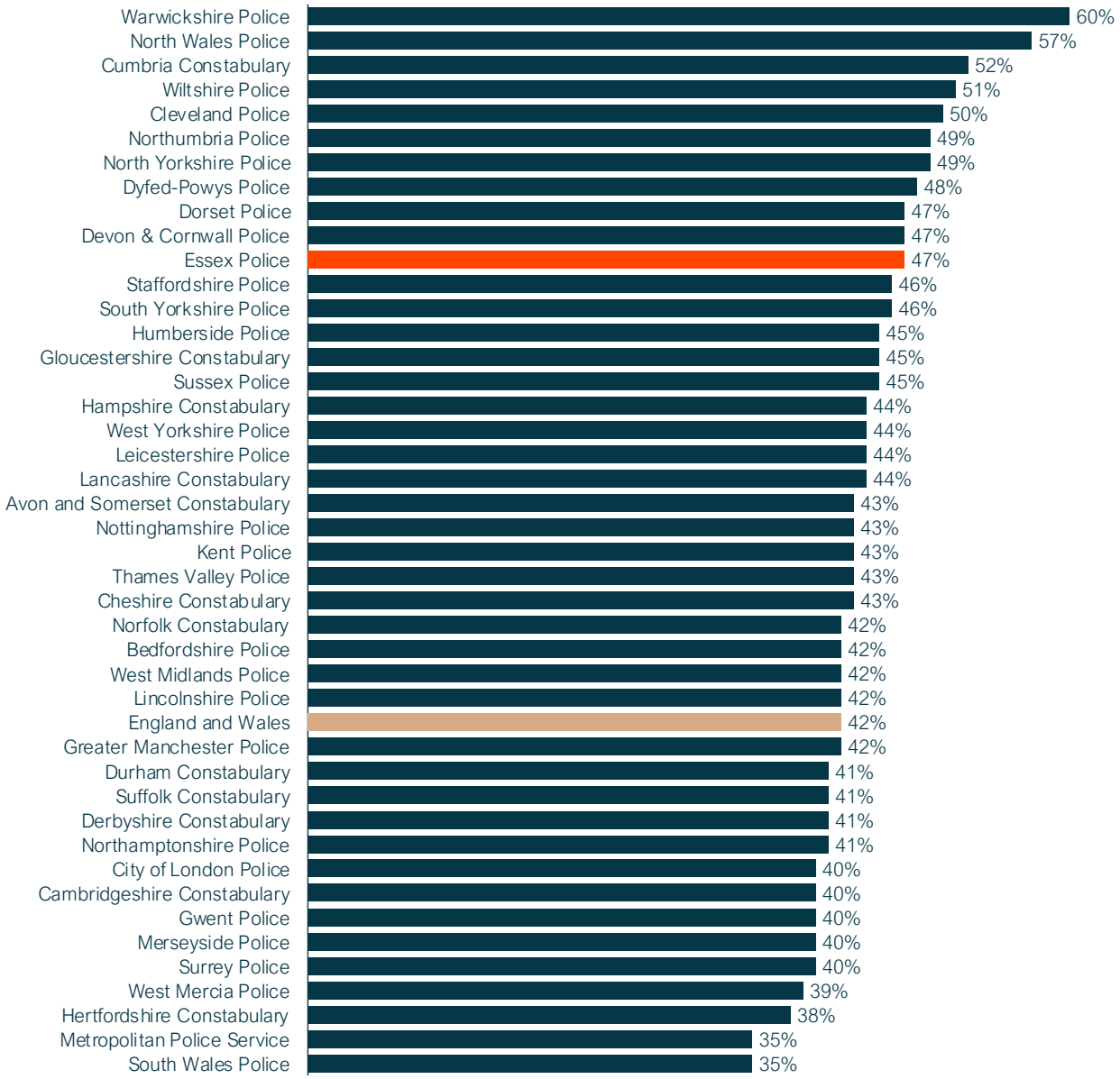
07 Comparison with other forces

The figures below compare Essex 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. Essex 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).

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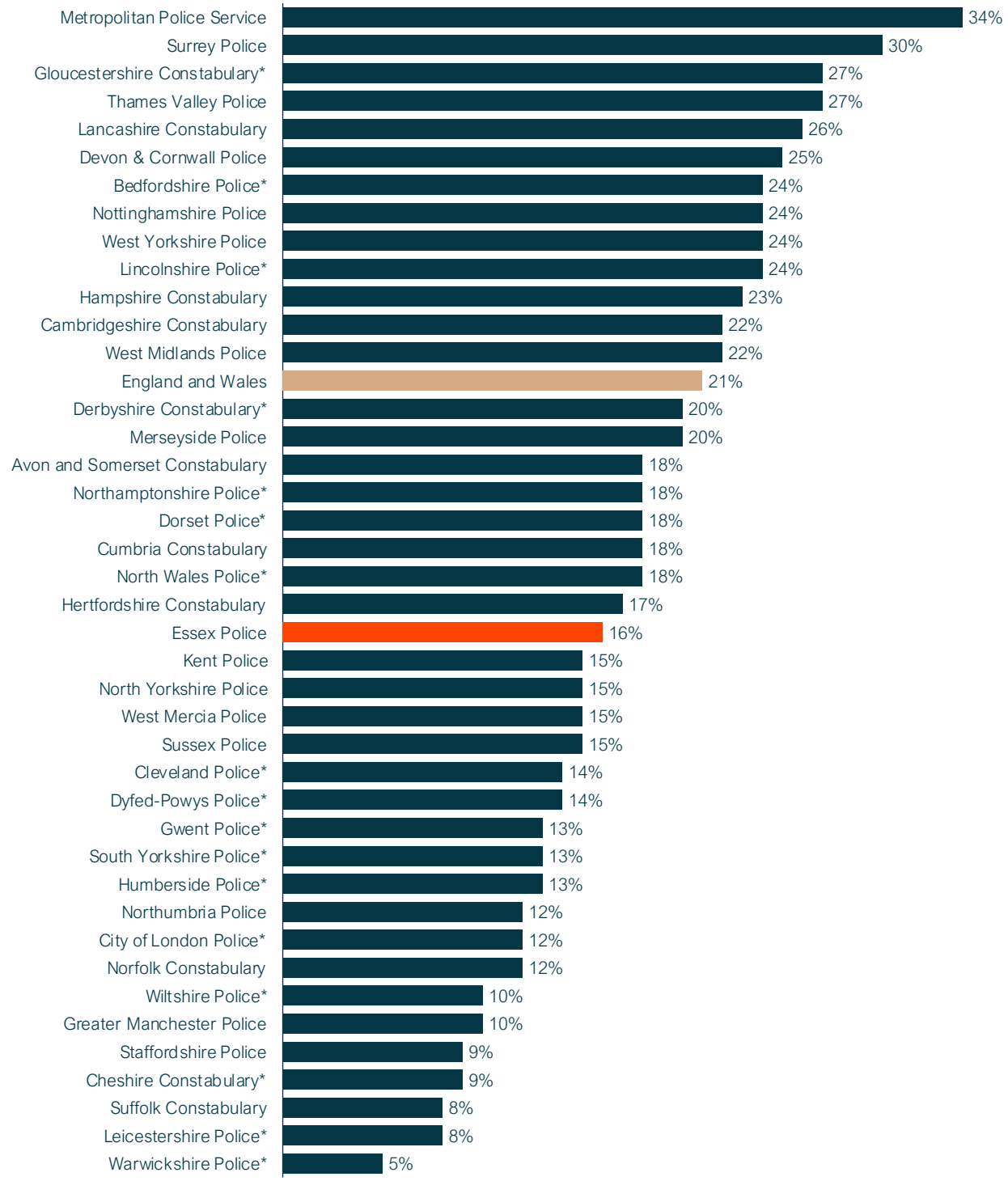
Figure 8: Intend to resign within two years or as soon as they can

% of respondents, by force. Essex 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.

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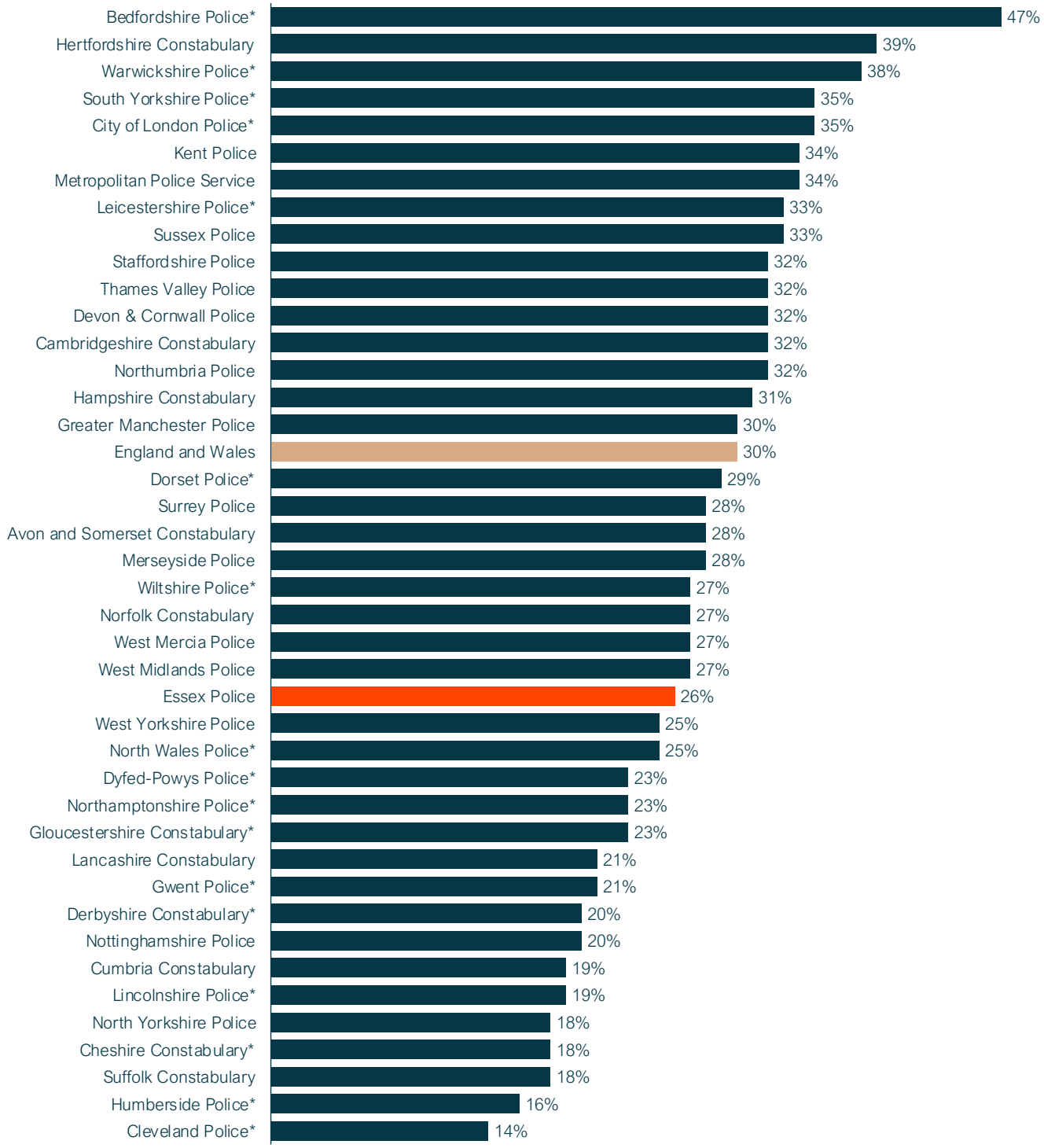
Figure 9: Struggle to meet their financial needs

% of respondents, by force. Essex 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.

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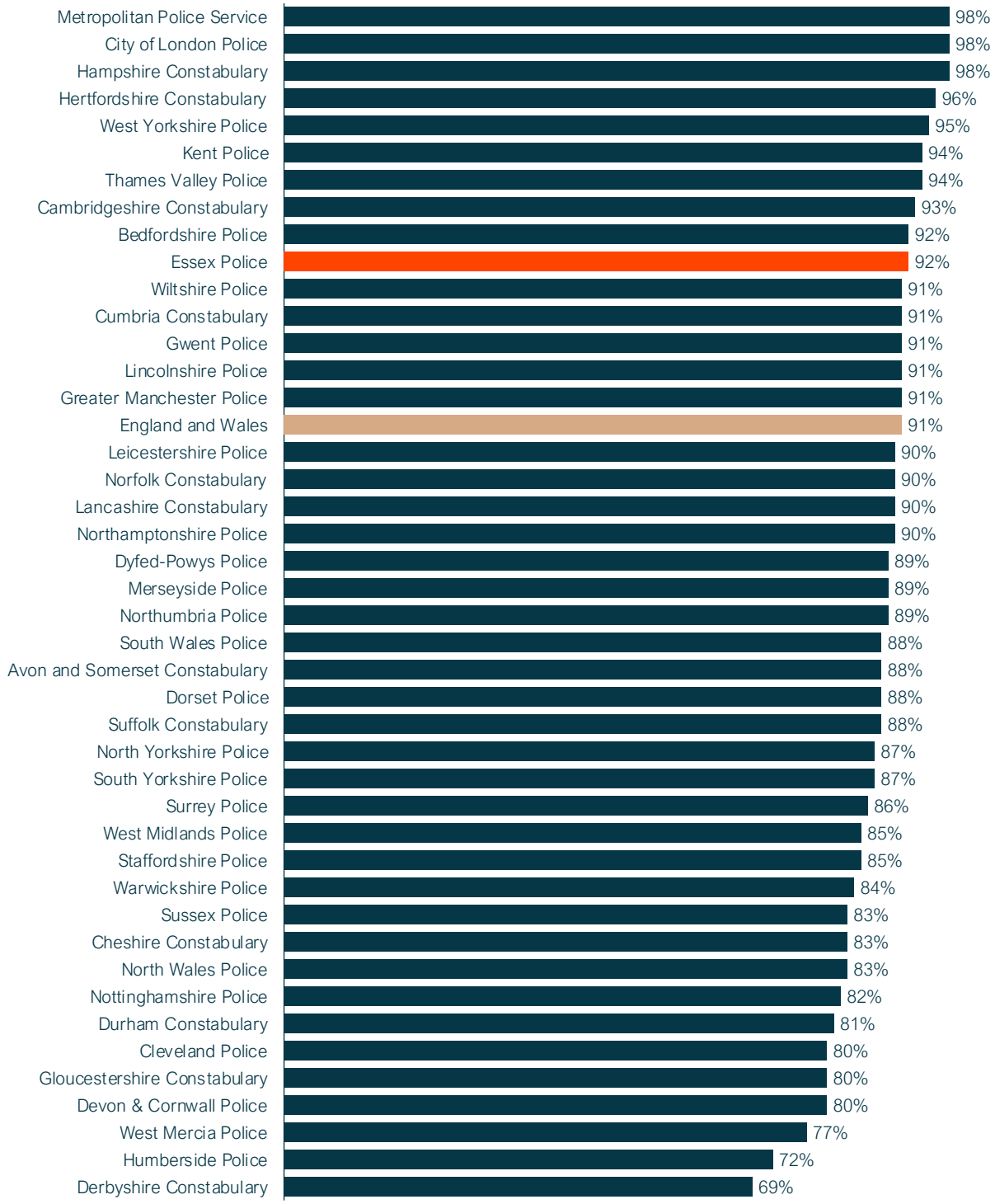
Figure 10: Had a PDR in the last 12 months

% of respondents, by force. Essex 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).

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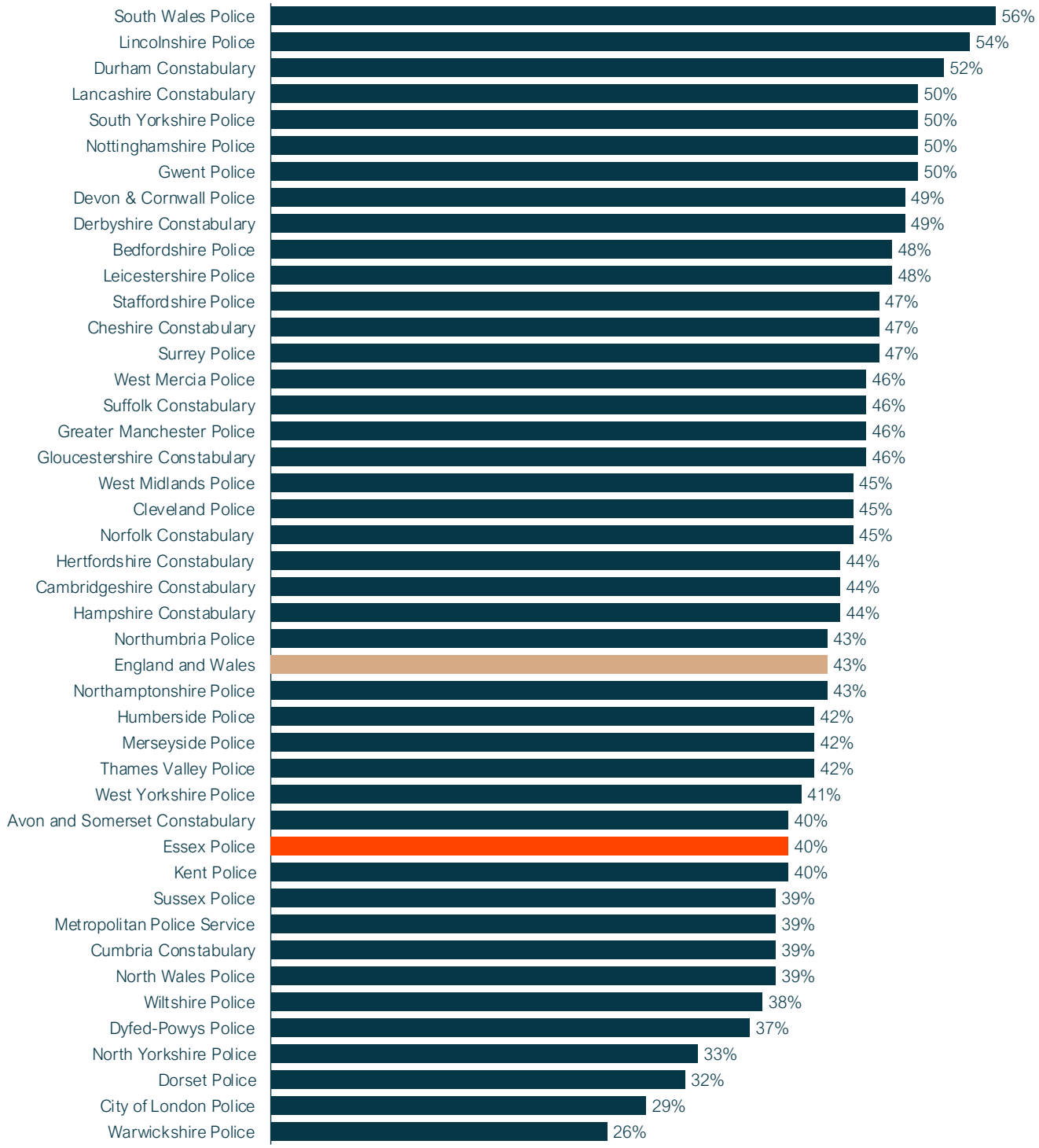
Figure 11: Find their job very or extremely stressful

% of respondents, by force. Essex 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).

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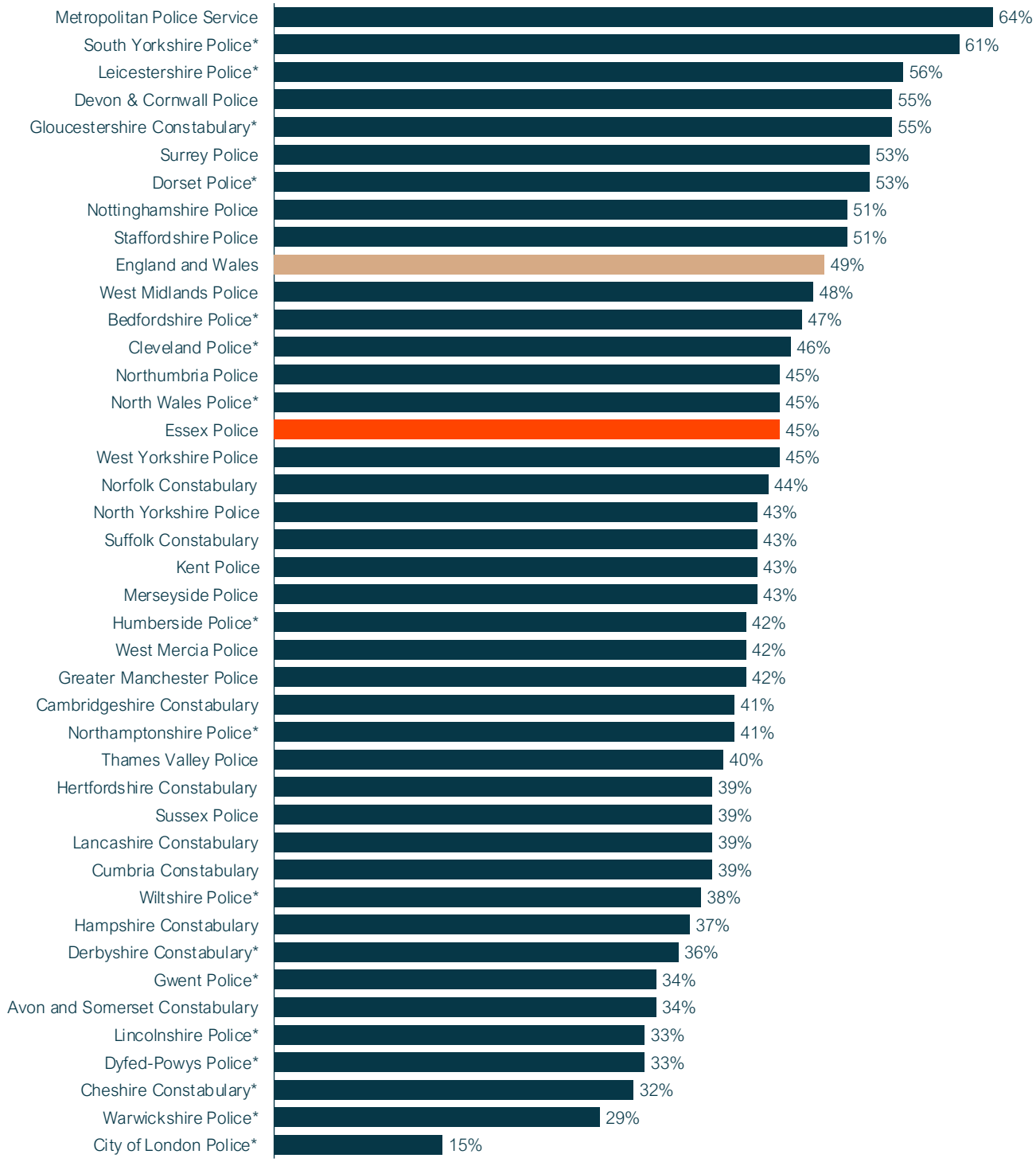
Figure 12: Do not feel fairly treated

% of respondents, by force. Essex 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.

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