

National Police Wellbeing Service



Summary of research in policing

Key issues and common themes



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To identify issues and common themes faced by the policing workforce, this report reviews and examines recent research findings presented by the Police Federation of England and Wales, UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, and the National Policing Wellbeing Service Survey¹. Where appropriate, survey research conducted on identified issues by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), The Police Uplift Programme², Police Care UK³, and Professor Jennifer Brown and colleagues⁴ is also reviewed and included in this report.

Research findings support that individuals working within policing are highly motivated to serve the public and to make a positive impact on individuals and communities through helping, benefiting, and protecting others from harm. Recent research (2021) has shown that professional commitment to policing, relating to a sense of dedication to the profession and a felt sense of responsibility for contributing to the success of policing, has been found to be at a moderately high average level for police officer and a high average level for police staff.

As can be expected, research findings have shown policing to be a demanding and stressful occupation. Individuals are exposed to high levels of threat and emotionally demanding situations. For example, in recent research, while 90% of police officer respondents reported having access to protective equipment such as batons, body armour and incapacitant spray while on duty, 18% reported that they had required medical attention for injuries caused by work-related violence during the previous 12 months. Furthermore, 37% had experienced verbal insults, 22% verbal threats, and 11% unarmed physical attacks from the public at least once a week.

Moreover, research evidence supports that a high percentage of police officers are exposed to traumatic incidents during their daily work. Many police officers and police staff have been shown to experience high frequencies of post-traumatic stress symptoms.

¹ Conducted annually by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University Business School, on behalf of the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo).

² Conducted by Kantar Public.

³ Conducted by Cambridge University.

⁴ Published in *Policing and Society* and *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*.

Police officers were found to experience very high levels of workload in terms of demands faced and levels of responsibility. For police staff, the average level was reported as high. Moreover, police officers on average reported facing very high levels of hindrance stressors or barriers to doing their work (e.g., poor systems and processes) compared with police staff who reported on average a moderately high frequency of experiencing this form of stress.

The research findings consistently indicate that wellbeing is a major issue for many individuals across the policing workforce. On average, police officer wellbeing is lower than that of police staff.

Wellbeing, as measured by emotional energy, of police officers was found to improve slightly during the COVID-19 pandemic, before returning in 2021/22 to a level just below that seen in the 2019/20 survey. For police staff, no material changes in emotional energy were evident across the three years.⁵

Research findings also consistently indicate that the mental wellbeing of the policing workforce should be regarded as a key issue. The average level of anxiety and depression symptoms for police officers has not materially changed over the past three years. For police staff, while the average level of anxiety and depression symptoms increased during the pandemic period, these then returned to the previous level.

In terms of police officer rank, wellbeing is lower on average at lower ranks compared with higher ranks. For police staff, little difference was found across different grades of seniority. For police officers, a sharp decline in average wellbeing is evident after two years in service. This trend is more gradual for police staff with the lowest average wellbeing occurring after eleven years' service. Research findings consistently indicate that shift working is associated with lower wellbeing.

Of note recent research (2022) indicated that 47% of police officers reported '*often*' or '*always*' working over 48 hours per week. In terms of police officers, 50% reported being '*rarely*' or '*never*' able to take their rest breaks, 61% reported having two or more rest days cancelled, and 38% indicated they had not been able to take annual leave they were entitled to in full within the past year.

⁵ The latest National Policing Wellbeing Survey has just been conducted and findings are expected later this year (2023), which will provide an update on this trend.

Recently (2023), His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Andy Cooke, identified the impact of the frequent occurrence of unacceptable police officer behaviour on police legitimacy and the public's view of whether the police are doing a good job as one of policing's "*biggest crises in living memory*".

Several research studies have confirmed that members of the policing workforce frequently experience inappropriate behaviour, by others within their force, such as sexism, racism, incivility, and derogatory comments and actions which do not demonstrate dignity and respect.

The HMICFRS (2022) research report commented that an alarming proportion of female officer respondents alleged experiencing sexual harassment and serious sexual assault from male colleagues. In the discussion of the findings of the UNISON commissioned Police Staff Sexual Harassment Survey (2018) it was commented that sexual harassment is a persistent issue in UK policing.

In the National Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Survey in England and Wales (2019) the proportion of female police officers who reported experiencing sexist comments from someone in their force in the past 12 months (34.5%) was higher than that for female police staff (21.2%), male police officers (17.9%), and male police staff (17.6%).

Research findings indicate that, in relation to their protected characteristics, almost two thirds of people reported experiencing being put down or treated in a condescending manner by someone in their force over the past 12 months. Of the individuals who identified as having a disability, 42.7% of police officers and 40.2% of police staff reported experiencing being put down or treated in a condescending manner *monthly or more frequently*.

Consistent with the concern identified regarding the decline in police legitimacy with the public, a sharp downward trend has been found over the past three years in the average levels for police officers' feelings of being respected and valued by the public. For police staff, the level has remained at a consistent level and is now higher than that for police officers.

The average scores for feeling valued by their force were also found recently (2022) to be lower for police officers (moderately low level) than police staff (moderate level). Police officer dissatisfaction with their pay has been reported to have steadily increased over the past eight years. In the latest research (2022), 86% of police officer respondents reported feeling

'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their basic pay and 69% of respondents reported that they worry about the state of their finances 'every day' or 'almost every day'. 56% of police officers reported feeling 'low' or 'very low' levels of morale.

Police officer job and life satisfaction was also found to be lower than that of staff. While for police staff there is little change over the past three years, for police officers a small decline is evident. Police officer intention to quit is reported as increasing over the past few years.

Durham University Policing Research Unit has not only conducted descriptive research to identify issues and trends, but has also conducted and reported predictive analyses to assist with the identification of factors influencing wellbeing.

While experiencing very high frequencies of challenge stressors can result in reduced wellbeing, experiencing hindrance stressors have been found to have a greater negative impact. Experiencing hindrance stressors has also consistently been shown to be associated with individuals feeling discouraged and disheartened, less valued by their organisation, less motivated to serve the public, and feeling reduced job satisfaction.

The importance of having sufficient opportunity to recover from work demands, both within and outside of normal working hours, for individuals' wellbeing has been demonstrated. Predictive analyses have demonstrated that the ability to switch off from work outside of normal working hours is associated with higher levels of wellbeing. Police officers were found to be less likely to switch off outside of working hours (moderately low average level) than police staff (moderately high average level), indicating that police officers tend to be more likely to be preoccupied by work thoughts in their personal time. For police officers, the ability to switch off outside of working hours was found to decline with rank. Several research reports indicate that this is particularly an issue for Superintendents and Chief Superintendents through being required to be 'on call' outside of their core hours of duty.

Predictive analyses have also demonstrated that experiencing inappropriate behaviour at work from someone else in their force is detrimental for police officer and police staff wellbeing, professional commitment, job and life satisfaction, and is associated with higher levels of intention to quit.

A sense of being valued by the public was found to be associated with police officer job satisfaction.

1 INTRODUCTION

The National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) have identified a need for an urgent review of research evidence to identify the main issues faced by the policing workforce. To meet this request, this report examines and summarises the issues and common themes presented in the research reports on survey findings from the Police Federation of England and Wales, UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, and the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys⁶.

Where appropriate, we also refer to research conducted on identified issues by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), The Police Uplift Programme⁷, Police Care UK⁸, and Professor Jennifer Brown and colleagues⁹.

A list of the research reports examined in this review are presented in Appendix A.

⁶ Conducted annually by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University Business School, on behalf of the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo).

⁷ Conducted by Kantar Public.

⁸ Conducted by Cambridge University.

⁹ Published in *Policing and Society* and *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*.

2 WELLBEING

National survey research on wellbeing in policing has been conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales, UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, Durham University¹⁰, and Cambridge University¹¹.

The research findings indicate that wellbeing is a major issue for many individuals across the policing workforce.

High levels of burnout and fatigue, anxiety, not being able to recover from stressful incidents, the negative impact of working shifts, difficulty to recover from high work demands through impaired rest days and poor sleep quality, and difficulty 'switching off' outside of working hours have been identified. Each of these issues is discussed below.

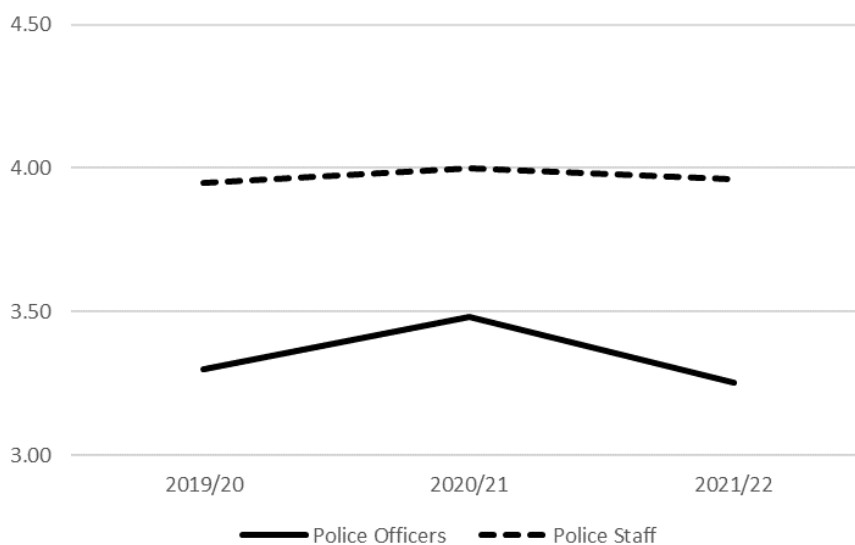
Emotional energy is considered as a key indicator of overall mental and physical wellbeing, with low levels indicating that an individual is under substantial strain and raising concerns with regard to the individual becoming burnt out [1, 2]. Broader academic research has shown that low levels of emotional energy can have serious damaging long-term health consequences for individuals, such as negative mental health outcomes and increased risk of immune system impairment, diabetes and cardiovascular disease [3, 4].

In the past three National Policing Wellbeing Surveys [5–7], average scores for police officers were found to be at a moderately low level indicating that many police officers are at risk of suffering burnout. Emotional energy for police staff was consistently found to be less negative than police officers, at a moderate average level.

As shown in Figure 1, the average level of emotional energy for police officers was found to improve slightly during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the average level in 2021/22 returned to a level just below that seen in the 2019/20 survey, it may be that the improvement in 2020/21 (during the COVID-19 pandemic) was due to a temporary reduction in the demand faced by the policing workforce. For police staff, no material changes were evident across the three years [5].

¹⁰ Conducted annually by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University Business School, on behalf of the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo). The latest National Policing Wellbeing Survey has recently been conducted, with results expected to be available later this year (2023).

¹¹ Conducted by Cambridge University on behalf of Police Care UK.

Figure 1: Trend of Average Scores for Emotional Energy

Notes: Graph based on national survey findings from the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo), conducted by Durham University [5–7]. Emotional energy was measured on a 1-7 scale.

Findings from the Police Federation Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey 2020¹² and the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey indicate that police officers and police staff experience high levels of fatigue.

In the Police Federation Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey 2020, 53% of the police officer respondents reported that they had found it difficult to carry out their work tasks due to fatigue over the 12 months prior to the survey [8].

In the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, 68.8% of police officers reported that they experience high levels of fatigue; for police staff, the frequency was 56.5% [5].

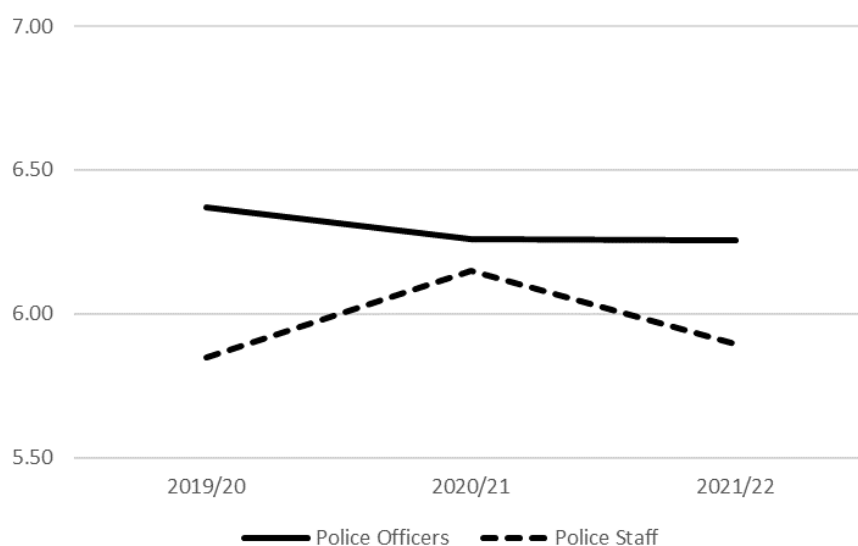
Research findings consistently indicate that the mental wellbeing of the policing workforce should be regarded as a key issue.

82% of police officer respondents to the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 indicated that they had experienced difficulties with their wellbeing such as stress, low mood or anxiety over the previous 12 months [9].

¹² The most recent Police Federation survey which measured and reported levels of fatigue.

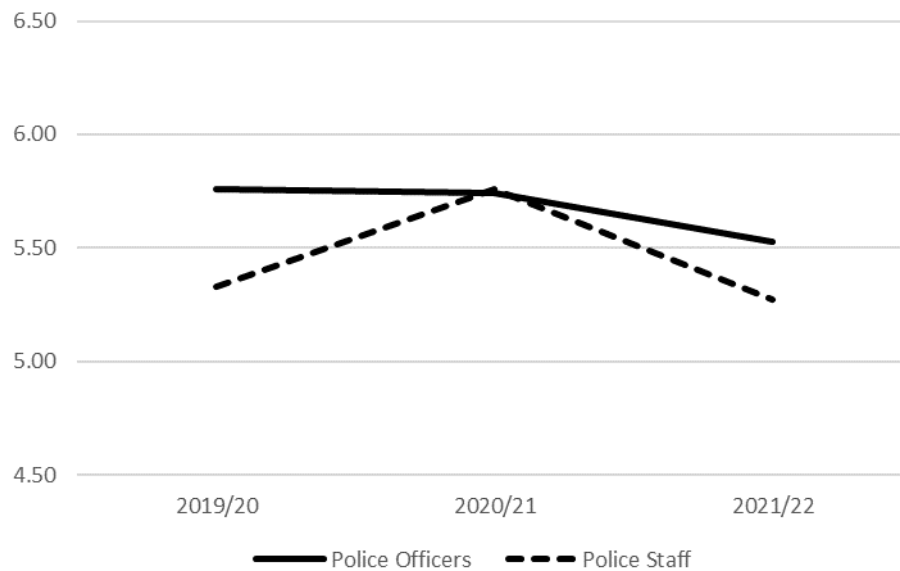
Findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey indicate that experiencing symptoms of anxiety was at a moderately high level for both police officers and police staff [5]. In terms of longitudinal trends, as shown in Figure 2, the average level of anxiety symptoms for police officers has not materially changed over the past three years. For police staff, while the average level of anxiety symptoms increased during the pandemic period, it then returned to a similar level.

Figure 2: Trend of Average Scores for Symptoms of Anxiety



Notes: Graph based on national survey findings from the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5–7].
Measured on a 0-10 scale.

Average scores for symptoms of depression (relating to feelings of sadness, despair, discouragement and worthlessness) in the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey were at a moderate level for both police officers and police staff, though some improvement was seen for both groups compared with the previous year (see Figure 3). For police staff, similar to the findings for symptoms of anxiety, the average level for depression symptoms notably increased during the pandemic period but has since returned to previous levels [5].

Figure 3: Trend of Average Scores for Symptoms of Depression

Notes: Graph based on national survey findings from the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5–7]. Measured on a 0-10 scale.

Findings from the 2018 Police Federation Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey [10] indicated that 62% of police officer respondents had been exposed to a potentially traumatic incident within the prior 12 months.

Examples of such incidents, and the proportions of police officer respondents who indicated having experienced these at some point during their time in service, include seeing the body of a person who has died a violent or unnatural death (96%), witnessing a violent or unnatural death (66%), attending to the victim of a serious physical (97%) or sexual (93%) assault, and having to view large volumes of child sexual abuse imagery (33%) as part of their roles [10].

14.8% of respondents indicated that they had sought help for mental health and wellbeing difficulties during the prior 12 months as a result of having experienced a potentially traumatic incident while in the line of duty [10].

Moreover, findings from the 2019/20 National Policing Wellbeing Survey also indicated that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a key issue for the policing workforce. 67% of police officers and 50% of police staff scored higher than the screening level on the Abbreviated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Checklist, indicating that they were experiencing relatively high frequencies of post-traumatic stress symptoms [7, 11].

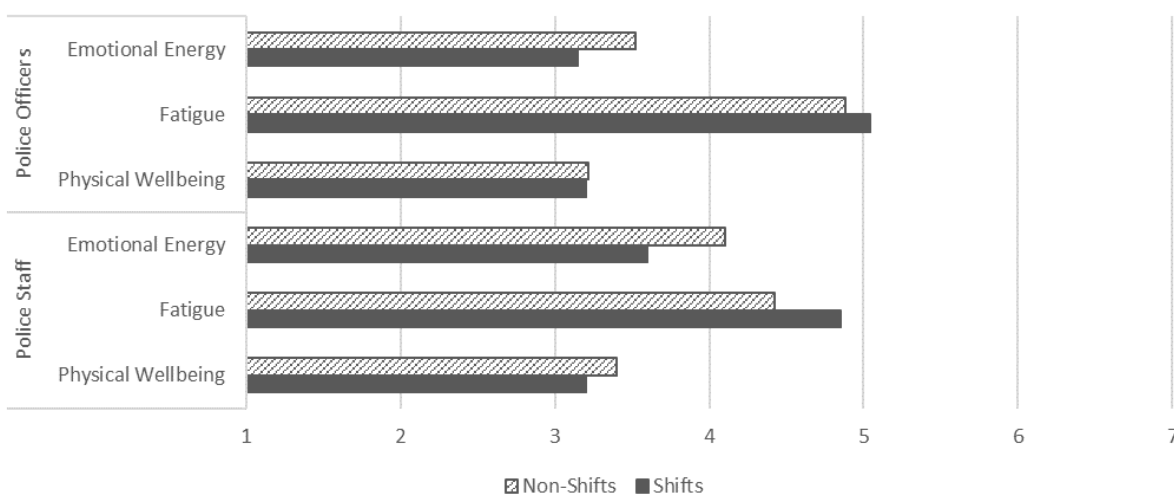
Furthermore, 90% of police officer respondents to the Police Care UK and Cambridge University 'Policing: The Job, The Life' survey in 2018 indicated that they had been exposed to a traumatic event. 20.6% of these individuals were diagnosed with either PTSD or complex-PTSD via the International Trauma Questionnaire [12].

Findings from the Police Federation's 2020 Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey indicated that 55% of the police officer respondents felt that the police service encourages people to openly talk about their mental health and wellbeing. However, 32% of respondents indicated a belief that people who disclosed mental health difficulties within policing would be treated in a negative manner [13].

Research findings consistently indicate that shift working is associated with lower wellbeing. In the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022, working shifts was highlighted by police officers as a core factor negatively affecting their wellbeing. Free text responses within the 2018 UNISON members' survey also raised shift work as a key theme of concern [14].

These concerns were supported by findings from the comparative analyses from the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys, with individuals working shifts found to report significantly lower average levels of emotional energy, and higher average levels of fatigue, than the officers and staff who do not work shifts [5] (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Comparison of Average Scores by Role and Shift Working



Notes: Graph based on the findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5].

Emotional energy and fatigue were asked on a 1-7 scale; physical wellbeing was on a 1-5 scale.

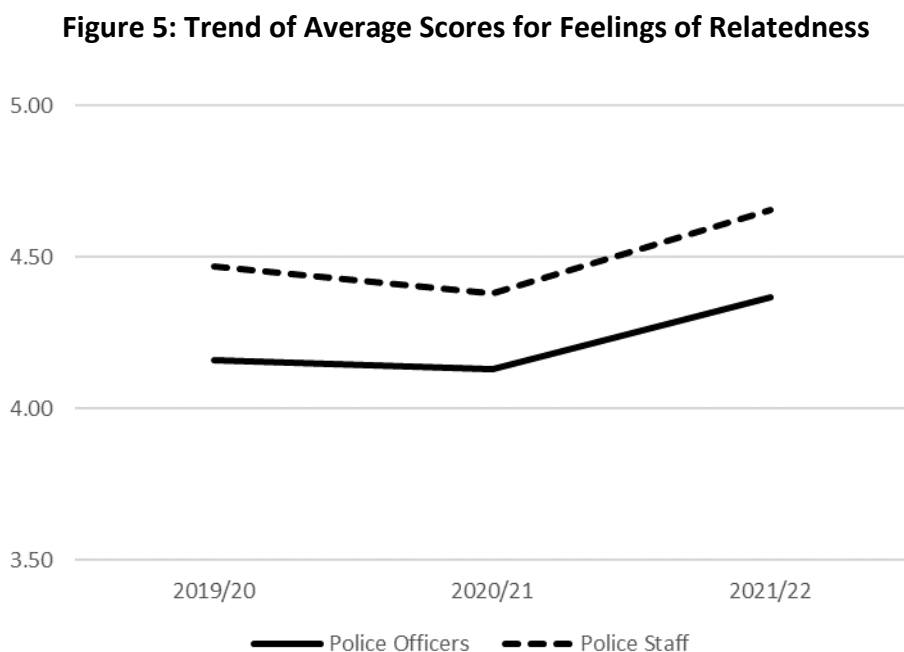
Higher scores for Emotional Energy and Physical Wellbeing and lower scores for Fatigue are desirable.

Three further factors that have been shown to be important for individuals' mental wellbeing are competence (feelings of being skilful and effective, having a sense of purpose and meaning, and being able to make a contribution), autonomy (feeling able to make decisions and behave in a way that is consistent with their personal values and beliefs rather than feeling pressurised), and relatedness (feeling a sense of belonging and being part of a team where they feel respected and valued) [15].

Findings from the past three National Policing Wellbeing Surveys suggest that police officers and police staff in the UK generally feel high levels of competence [5–7].

Also positively, as shown in Figure 5, following a small decline in feelings of relatedness for police staff at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey showed an increase in this measure for both officers and staff. Average scores were at a moderately high level for both groups [5].

Average scores for feelings of autonomy were at a moderate level for officers and a moderately high level for staff.



Notes: Graph based on national survey findings from the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5–7].
Measured on a 1-7 scale.

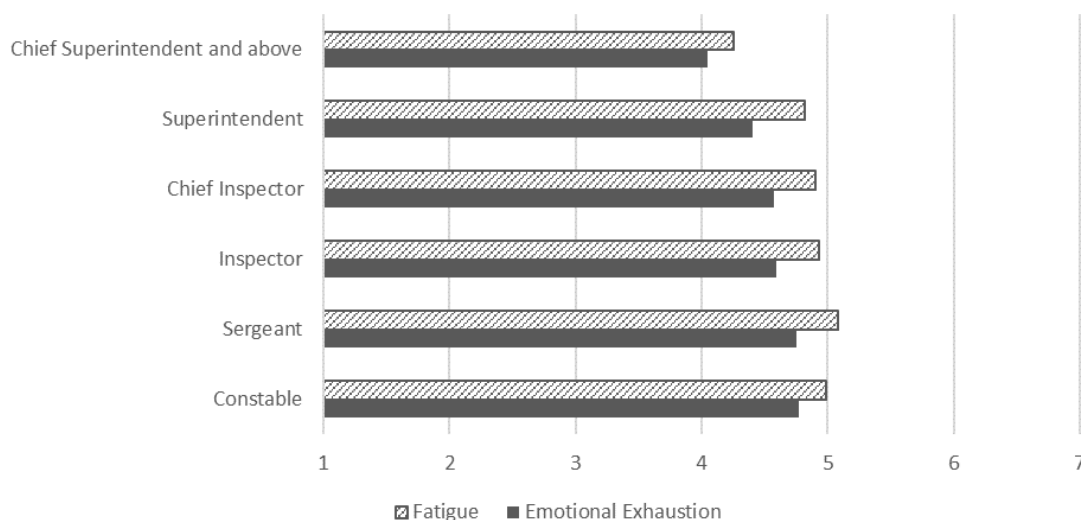
Research findings support that the physical wellbeing of the policing workforce is not a major issue. For example, 73% of police officer respondents to the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 indicated their physical health was either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ [9]. Furthermore, average physical wellbeing scores in the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey were at a moderate level for police officers and a moderately high level for police staff [5].

Differences in wellbeing have been found between occupational job types, with individuals working in roles such as Safeguarding, CID/Local Investigations, Custody and Detention, Contact Management/Central Communications Units and Response/Incident Management generally reporting lower wellbeing scores on average in the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys than individuals working within other departments [6, 7].

Wellbeing scores in the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys were generally found to improve by rank for police officers, with the average scores of most concern seen at Constable and Sergeant levels (see Figures 6 and 8).

As can be seen in Figure 7, little difference was evident across police staff grades for average levels of fatigue and emotional exhaustion. As can be seen in Figure 9, mental wellbeing was found to improve slightly by grade [5].

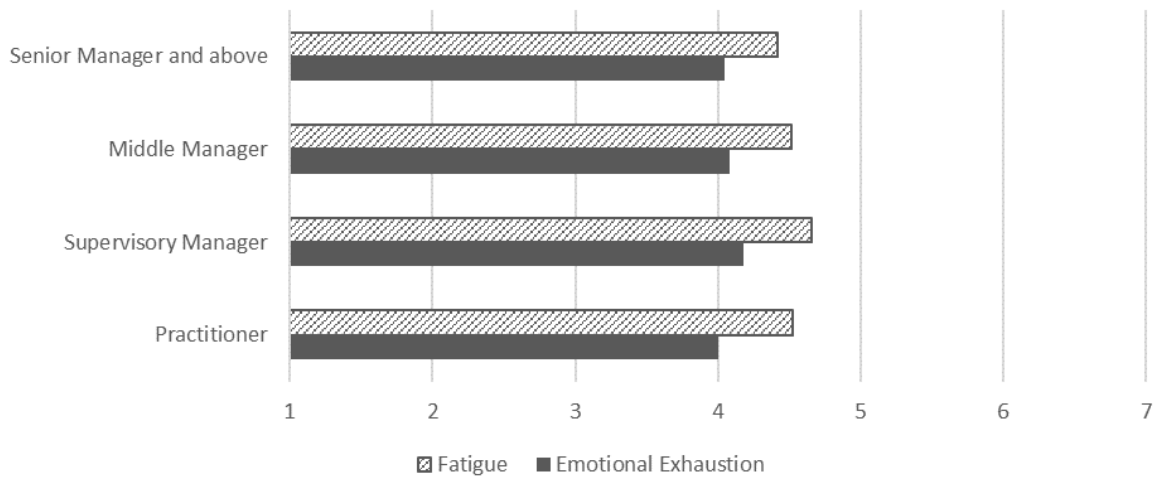
Figure 6: Average Scores for Fatigue and Emotional Exhaustion by Rank



Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5].

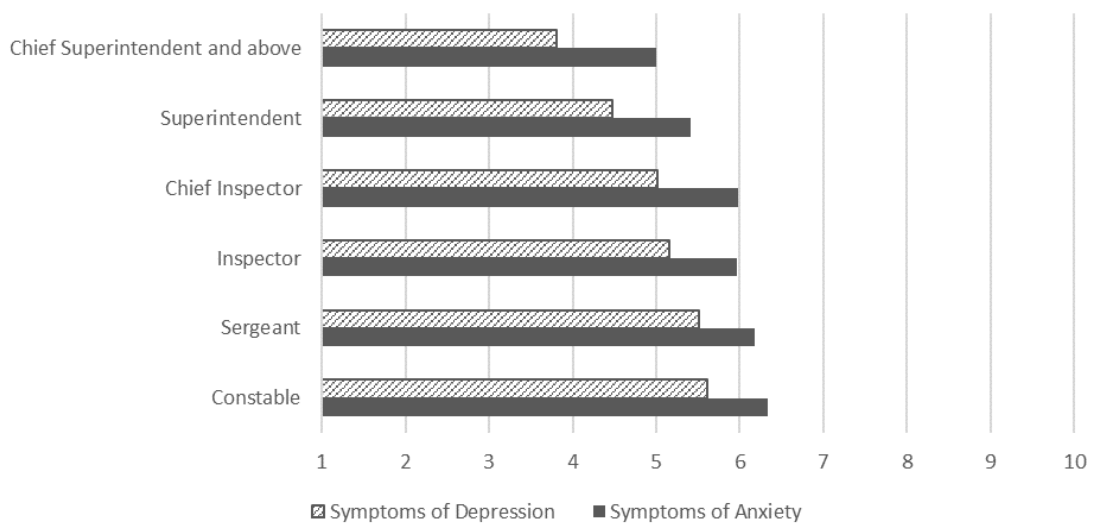
Both measures were rated on a 1-7 scale. Please note that this graph is showing emotional *exhaustion* average scores for easier comparison alongside the fatigue scores; lower scores are desirable for both measures.

Figure 7: Average Scores for Fatigue and Emotional Exhaustion by Grade



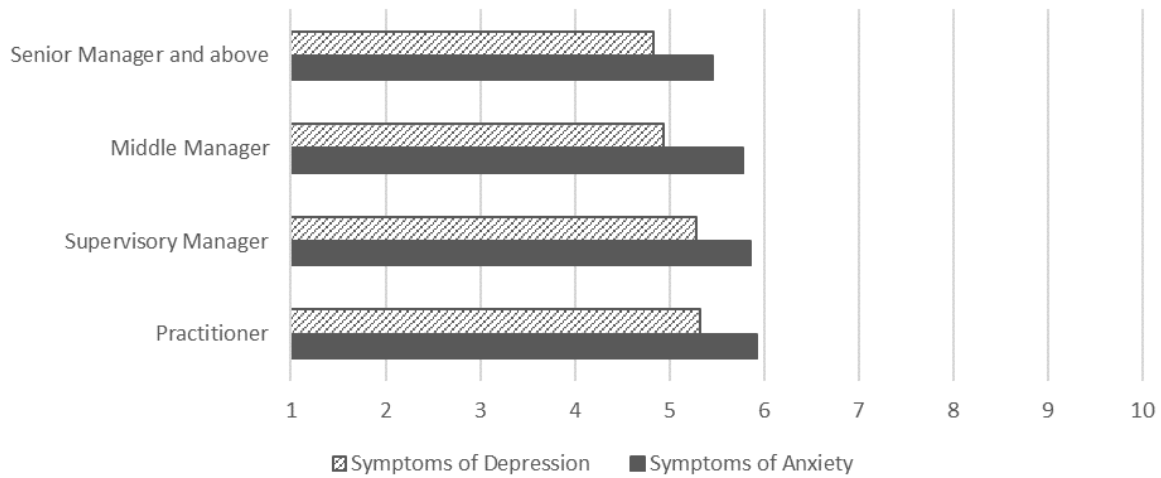
Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-7 scale. Please note that this graph is showing emotional *exhaustion* average scores for easier comparison alongside the fatigue scores; lower scores are desirable for both measures.

Figure 8: Average Scores for Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety by Rank



Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-10 scale.

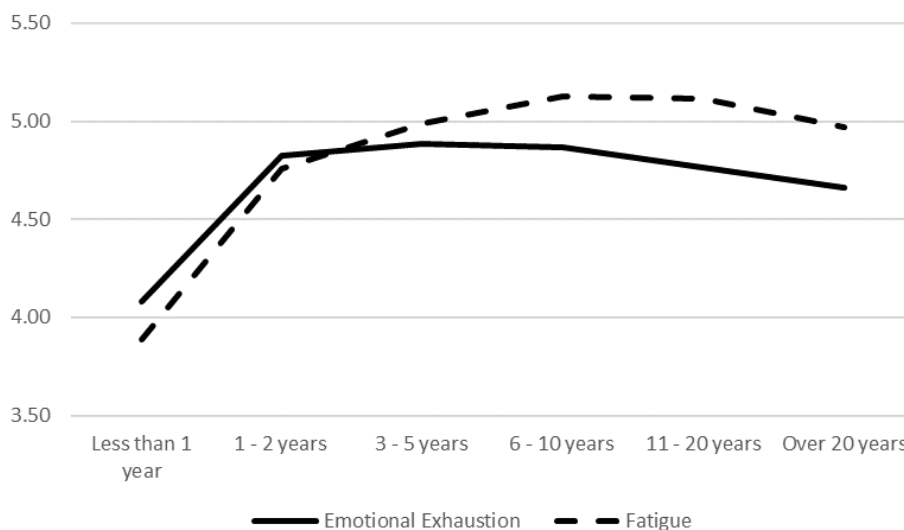
Figure 9: Average Scores for Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety by Grade



Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-10 scale.

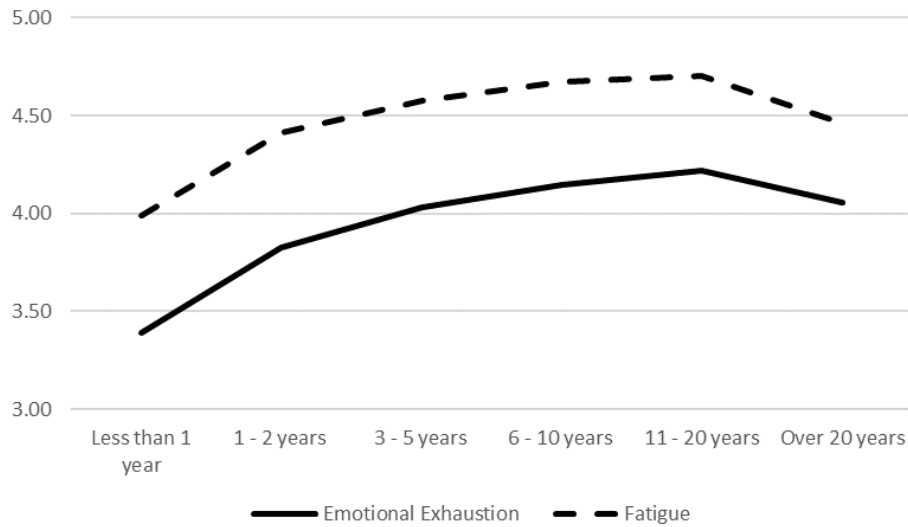
Considering tenure within policing, police officer wellbeing measures were generally most positive for respondents with less than 1 year of service, with a rapid decline apparent within the first year (see Figures 10 and 12). A similar but less pronounced trend was also evident across length of service for police staff (see Figures 11 and 13), though with a more notable improvement in scores for individuals with over 20 years of service.

Figure 10: Average Scores for Fatigue and Emotional Exhaustion by Tenure, Police Officers



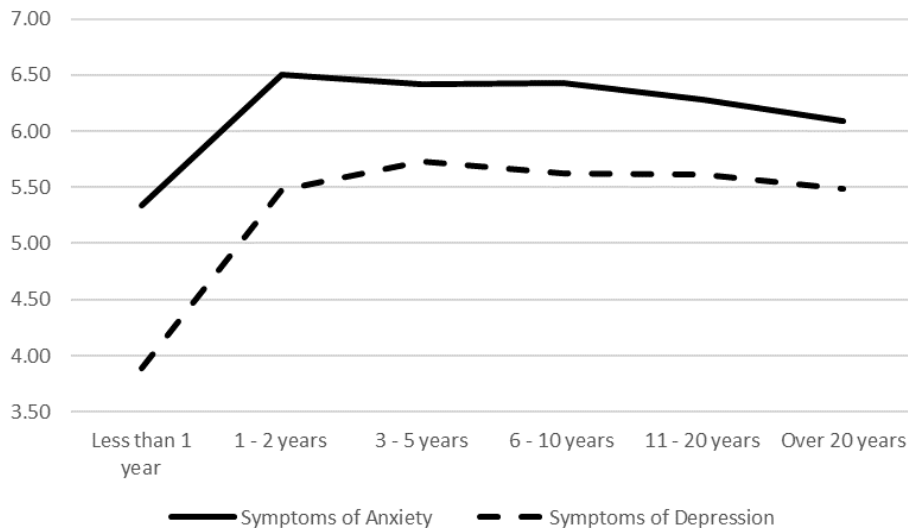
Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-7 scale. Please note that this graph is showing emotional *exhaustion* average scores for easier comparison alongside the fatigue scores; lower scores are desirable for both measures.

Figure 11: Average Scores for Fatigue and Emotional Exhaustion by Tenure, Police Staff

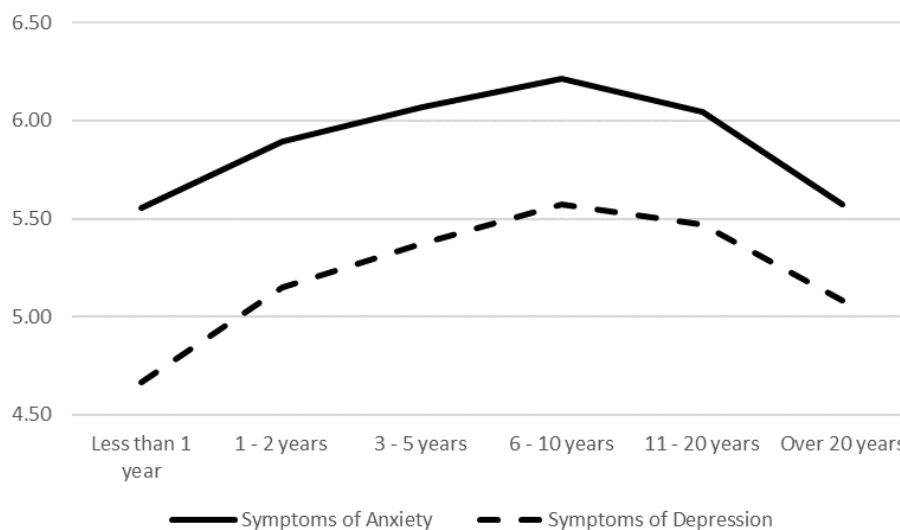


Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-7 scale. Please note that this graph is showing emotional *exhaustion* average scores for easier comparison alongside the fatigue scores; lower scores are desirable for both measures.

Figure 12: Average Scores for Symptoms of Depression/Anxiety by Tenure, Police Officers



Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-10 scale.

Figure 13: Average Scores for Symptoms of Depression/Anxiety by Tenure, Police Staff

Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-10 scale.

The 2018 collaborative Menopause Survey, led by the Police Federation¹³, highlighted the difficulties faced by the individuals affected; of the respondents who had been or were going through the menopause, 76% indicated that they had found the symptoms moderately or extremely problematic at work. Key difficulties affecting individuals included tiredness and sleep disturbance, hot flushes, poor memory and concentration, anxiety, depression, and reduced confidence [16].

Of the respondents who had disclosed that they were experiencing symptoms of the menopause to their line manager, 15% of police officers and 10% of police staff indicated that they had not been treated with dignity and respect. Furthermore, 31% of police officers and 20% of police staff indicated feeling that they had not been given enough support following their disclosure [16].

One key mechanism affecting individuals' wellbeing is having sufficient recovery from their work demands [17, 18]. To have the opportunity and ability to adequately recover, people need to gain temporary psychological distance from their work to reduce further depletion of the internal resources used at work, whilst also engaging in other positive activities that help increase internal resources such as positive emotions [19, 20].

¹³ With the support of UNISON, the Police Superintendents' Association, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the British Transport Police Federation.

The findings from the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 [9] indicated concerns regarding recovery from workplace stressors through feeling pressurised to work long hours, not being able to take their annual leave entitlement, and through leaveism [21, 22] and presenteeism [23]. The evidence of each of these is presented below.

33% of police officer respondents indicated '*often*' or '*always*' feeling pressured to work long hours and 47% indicated they had '*often*' or '*always*' worked over 48 hours per week over the prior 12 months. 38% of police officer respondents indicated they had not been able to take the annual leave they are entitled to in full within the past year, and 61% had two or more of their rest days cancelled within that time period. In terms of 'leaveism', 33% and 42%, respectively, of police officer respondents reported having felt it necessary to use their annual leave to take time off due to issues with physical or psychological health. In addition, in terms of 'presenteeism', 67% reported having attended work while they were unwell.

Academic research in many contexts outside of policing has indicated that shorter term breaks such as weekends, lunch breaks and informal moments of respite through the working day also play an important role in individuals' recovery from work strain [24].

50% of police officer respondents to the Pay and Morale Survey 2022 reported having '*rarely*' or '*never*' been able to take their rest breaks in full, compared with 28% who reported '*often*' or '*always*' being able to do so [9].

The findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey indicated that psychological detachment or '*switching off*' from work was indeed associated with more positive levels of emotional energy in respondents. Average psychological detachment scores were lower for police officer respondents (moderately low level) than police staff respondents (moderately high level), indicating that officers tend to be more likely to be preoccupied by work thoughts in their personal time [6].

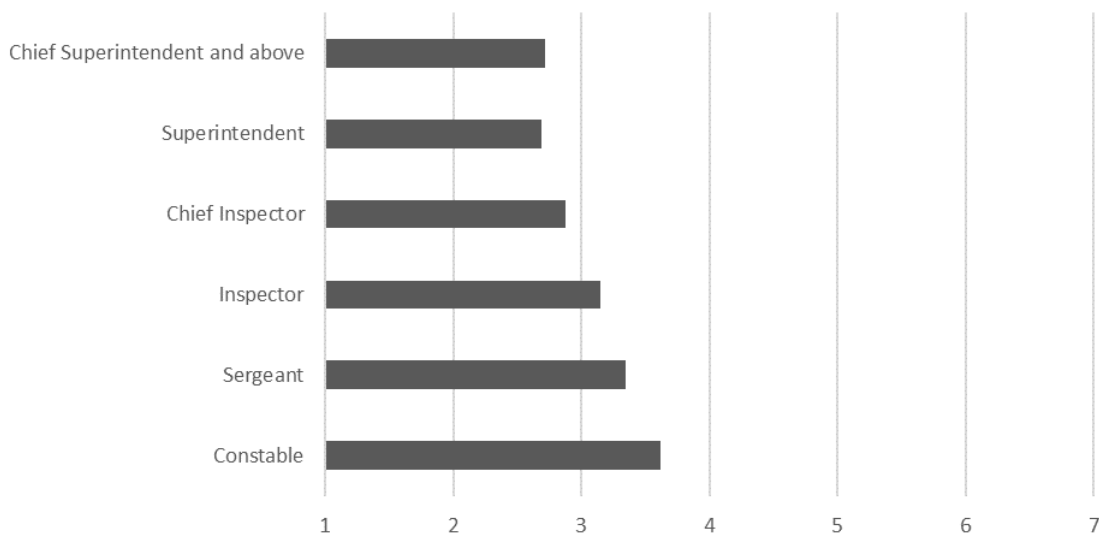
A positive finding is that responses across the first three National Policing Wellbeing Surveys indicate a small upwards trend in average psychological detachment scores for both police officers and police staff [5–7].

As shown in Figures 14 and 15, psychological detachment was found in the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey to decline with rank/grade, with Superintendents for police officers

and ‘senior managers and above’ for police staff reporting the lowest average levels of ‘switching off’ from work in personal time [5].

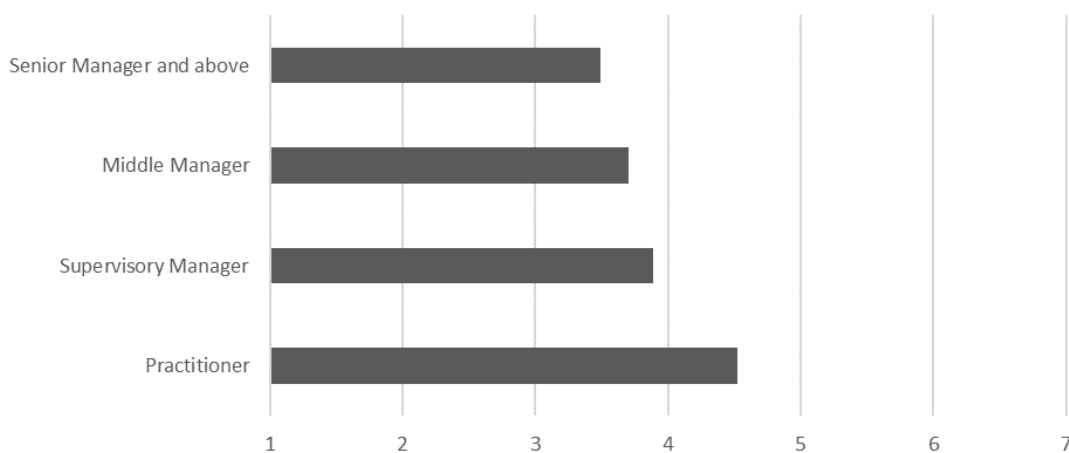
The ability to ‘switch off’ outside of normal working hours was also identified as an issue in the Police Superintendents’ Association 2022 Pay Survey. 93% Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents reported being required to be ‘on call’ outside of their core hours of duty.

Figure 14: Average Scores for Psychological Detachment from Work by Rank



Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-7 scale.

Figure 15: Average Scores for Psychological Detachment from Work by Grade



Notes: Graph based on findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5]. Both measures were rated on a 1-7 scale.

A further vital factor for wellbeing and recovery is having sufficient sleep [25]. Broader academic research has shown the relationship between poor sleep quality / insufficient sleep and long-term health issues [26], performance [27], risk of workplace injury [28], bias and reactivity to emotional stimuli [29, 30], and an inability to effectively lead others [31].

Predictive analyses in the National Policing Wellbeing Survey research supported that having higher frequencies for disturbed and insufficient sleep was associated with a detrimental impact on wellbeing in the policing workforce [5–7].

Average levels of sleep quality and quantity were consistently found to be lower on average for police officers than police staff [5–7]. In the most recent National Policing Wellbeing Survey (2021/22), 27% of police officers and 19% of police staff reported having disturbed sleep ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’. For having insufficient sleep (less than 6 hours), 44% of police officers and 28% of police staff indicated that this was the case ‘very often’ or ‘all of the time’ [5].

Similar to the previous negative findings reported above on the relationship between shifts and wellbeing, shift working was also found to be associated with poorer sleep quality and quantity in the three National Policing Wellbeing Surveys [5–7]. The results from the most recent survey are presented in Table 1. As can be seen, insufficient sleep is a particular issue for both police officers and police staff who work shifts.

Table 1: Sleep Quality and Quantity by Shift Work and Role

Role	Shift Working	Disturbed Sleep <i>(Frequency of “very often” or “all of the time”)</i>	Insufficient Sleep <i>(Frequency of “very often” or “all of the time”)</i>
Police Officer	Shifts (n = 12,786)	25.5%	43.5%
	No Shifts (n = 5,054)	22.4%	32.7%
Police Staff	Shifts (n = 3,910)	24.2%	38.8%
	No Shifts (n = 10,425)	16.4%	24.8%

Note: From the 2021/22 national survey findings from the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5].

Of the people who had indicated having experienced difficulties with their health and wellbeing in the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022, 92% felt these difficulties had been caused or exacerbated by their work, with the most common attributions being high workload (60%) and poor work/life balance (49%), with factors such as shift working, access to leave, impact of change, role uncertainty, and exposure to traumatic or distressing incidents also highlighted but to a lesser extent [9].

The UNISON members' survey in 2018 also indicated that 47% of the police staff respondents felt that their work negatively impacts on their wellbeing [14].

Predictive analyses conducted for the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys confirm that when individuals face very high levels of workload, this has a detrimental impact on their wellbeing [5]. Dealing with hindrances at work was found to have an even greater negative effect than workload and high levels of responsibility (for a more detailed discussion, see Section 9), as was experiencing incivility behaviour from colleagues within the force (see Section 3).

3 EXPERIENCING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Inappropriate behaviour can be regarded as, but is not limited to, unwanted sexual attention, sexual harassment, derogatory comments, sexism, racism, incivility and behaviours towards minority groups which do not demonstrate dignity and respect.

Research into interpersonal mistreatment relating to an individual's gender by someone in their force has been conducted by the HMICFRS [32], Durham University¹⁴ [33], Professor Jennifer Brown and colleagues [34], and UNISON¹⁵ [35]. The findings of these four research studies indicate that levels of sexual harassment and sexist behaviour experienced by females within policing is at a high level.

The seriousness of inappropriate sexual behaviour by police officers towards members of the public was commented upon in the recent HMICFRS State of Policing Report. His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Andy Cooke, commented "*rarely does a day go by without another story of a disgraced police officer reaching the headlines*" [32, page 3]. He identified that "*the police are experiencing one of their biggest crises in living memory*" [page 3] and linked this with the negative impact of unacceptable police officer behaviour on police legitimacy.

The research conducted by Brown and colleagues in 2018 identified that the most common display of sexual harassment at work was 'banter'. Examples of 'banter' include sexual joking, gossiping about someone's private life appearance and commenting on another's appearance. The findings showed that one fifth of respondents reported that being exposed to 'banter'-related sexual harassment was associated with feelings of stress [35].

Research conducted by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University found that the proportion of female police officers who reported experiencing sexist comments from someone in their force in the past 12 months (34.5%) was higher than that for female police staff (21.2%), male police officers (17.9%), and male police staff (17.6%) [33].

¹⁴ The research by Durham University was conducted following the request of the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) Lead for Workforce Representation and Diversity.

¹⁵ Conducted by Professor Brown and colleagues.

The frequency that police personnel from minority groups (disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion or belief, sexual orientation) experience derogatory comments or are treated in a condescending manner was examined in the research conducted by Durham University in 2019. The findings highlighted that, across most protected characteristics, almost two thirds of people reported experiencing being put down or treated in a condescending manner by someone in their force over the past 12 months [33].

Research conducted by Cain in 2019 [36] identified concerns in the disproportionality in treatment of minority ethnic police officers following public complaints or internal allegations of misconduct. In 2022, research by the Police Uplift Programme, investigating the experience of black or black-heritage police officers and staff, found that incidents of racial microaggressions, discrimination and harassment from colleagues were prevalent in the past 12 months [37].

UNISON's 2015 Police Staff Bullying Survey [38] identified that bullying in the workplace is a pervasive issue, and commented that "*bullying behaviour is deeply rooted in the workplace culture of policing*" [page 17] with 54% of respondents reporting that bullying occurs weekly or more frequently.

The Policing Research Unit at Durham University conducted research which found that experiencing workplace incivility was detrimental for individual wellbeing [5], professional commitment, job satisfaction and life satisfaction, and was associated with higher levels of intention to quit [7].

For completeness and depth of understanding of the issues, the findings of each of the research reports are presented below.

Inspection of Vetting, Misconduct, and Misogyny in the Police Service Survey 2022

The 2022 HMICFRS research involved a survey of 11,277 police officers, police staff and volunteers within England and Wales [39]. Forty-two interviews were also conducted. In discussion of the findings, it was commented that an alarming proportion of female officer respondents alleged experiencing sexual harassment and serious sexual assault from male colleagues.

Over 90% of respondents indicated they were aware of how to report prejudicial and improper behaviour. However, out of the responses who indicated they had made a report, “only 28 percent of women and 35 percent of men said they were satisfied with the outcome” [39, page 111]. Many of the individuals interviewed for the inspection revealed that, in their experience, their allegations were not taken seriously. Further to this, overly lenient assessments of allegations were found to undermine staff confidence and their willingness to report wrongdoing.

In conclusion the report identified that “*in too many places, a culture of misogyny, sexism and predatory behaviour towards members of the public and female police officers and staff still exists*” [39, page 12].

National Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Survey 2019

In 2019, the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) Lead for Workforce Representation and Diversity commissioned the Policing Research Unit at Durham University to conduct the first National Police Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Survey in England and Wales [33]. Over 34,000 police personnel in England and Wales responded to the survey, and the findings suggested that 29.1% of police officers and 25.7% of police staff reported they had been put down or treated in a condescending manner by someone in their force monthly or more frequently in the past 12 months.

Of the individuals who identified as having a disability, 42.7% of police officers and 40.2% of police staff reported experiencing being put down or treated in a condescending manner monthly or more frequently. Furthermore, 54.0% of police officers and 45.8% of police staff reported experiencing being interrupted and not allowed to finish what they were saying, and 61.7% of police officers and 54.2% of police staff reported experiencing not being listened to when expressing their views and opinions on a monthly or more frequent basis.

Male and female police officer respondents reported similar frequencies of experiencing the three forms of incivility behaviour (treated in a condescending way; not allowed to finish what they were saying; not being listened to). This was also the case for male and female police staff respondents.

The proportion of respondents experiencing offensive remarks about their appearance, body, or private life from someone in their force in the past 12 months was at a similar level across between police officers and police staff, at an average level of almost one in five.

The proportion of female police officers who reported experiencing sexist comments from someone in their force in the past 12 months (34.5%) was higher than that for female police staff (21.2%), male police officers (17.9%), and male police staff (17.6%).

A noteworthy finding is that 27.8% of female police officers reported experiencing derogatory remarks about their gender in the past 12 months. This compares to 13.3% of female police staff, 8.8% of male police officers, and 7.4% of male police staff.

Of concern is that, more than one in three respondents identifying as having a disability reported experiencing derogatory comments about their disability by someone in their force over the past 12 months. Furthermore, survey findings indicated that more than one in three Muslim respondents experienced derogatory comments about their religion by someone in their force over the previous 12 months. While the overall proportion of Christian respondents who reported experiencing derogatory remarks about their religion/beliefs in the past 12 months was lower at an average of 9.2% ($n = 865$), it should be noted that for Christian respondents who reported attending their place of worship weekly or more frequently, the proportion was 42.1% ($n = 249$).

BAME respondents, female police officers, and individuals identifying as LGB reported similar levels of experiencing derogatory comments about their protected characteristics (27 - 29%) by someone in their force over the past 12 months.

National Police 'Our Black Workforce' Survey 2022

In 2022, 'Our Black Workforce' Survey [37] was launched by The Police Uplift Programme with the Police Race Action Plan, National Police Chiefs' Council, National Black Police Association and partners¹⁶. Over 1,600 black and black-heritage police officers and staff across 44 forces responded to the survey, and the findings suggested that incidents of racial microaggressions, discrimination and harassment from colleagues were prevalent in the past 12 months.

¹⁶ Conducted by Kantar Public.

However, analysis found that reporting of the three racially motivated incidents were at low levels. Of further note is that when incidents were reported, over 50% of complainants were highly dissatisfied with the outcome.

From the respondents who indicated they had personally experienced racially motivated incidents ($n = 819$), 64% reported they disagreed that they had a strong sense of belonging in their force, this compares to 19% of respondents who had not personally experienced any incidents. To support this finding, respondents who experience incidents are three times more likely (77%) to feel like an ‘outsider’ as a result of their ethnicity, compared to those who had not experienced any incidents (25%).

Four out of five (82%) respondents who indicated not having experienced any incidents agreed that their force had opportunities for their progression. Tellingly, of those who indicated having experienced incidents this proportion reduced significantly to two out of five reporting agreement (42%).

The experience of harassment and discrimination was identified as a key reason for respondents considering leaving the police service.

National Policing Wellbeing Survey 2021/22

In 2021/22, the third National Policing Wellbeing Survey was conducted by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University [5]. Analysis of the 36,633 responses from police personnel across England and Wales showed that the frequency of experienced incivility from someone at work was at a higher average level for Constables and Sergeants compared with other police officer ranks and is significantly lower for Chief Superintendents and above. In contrast, for police staff, the highest average frequency of experiencing incivility was reported for individuals in the supervisory manager and middle manager grades.

Police Staff Sexual Harassment Survey 2018

UNISON commissioned a Police Staff Sexual Harassment Survey [35] in 2018 for its members. Analysis of the 1,776 submissions supported that sexual harassment is a persisting issue in UK policing. The findings indicated that sexual harassment is most likely initiated by peers, then by supervisors, then by junior colleagues.

The research showed that the main display of sexual harassment at work was ‘banter’. Examples of ‘banter’ include sexual joking, gossiping about someone’s private life appearance and commenting on another’s appearance.

Despite low levels of occurrence, other forms of more severe sexual harassment were nonetheless reported as being observed in the previous 12 months. These forms of sexual harassment included hostile behaviours and explicit behaviours. Hostile behaviours include unwanted physical touching, repeatedly being told dirty jokes, or being sent communications of a sexualised nature. Explicit behaviours include more serious threatening or coercive behaviour, such as unwelcomed hugging, kissing, receiving sexual gestures, inappropriate staring and feeling pressurised to have sex. Of note is that, when ‘banter’ was reported in the working environment this was found to increase the likelihood of the more severe, explicit forms of sexual harassment. The more explicit forms of sexual harassment were associated with higher levels of stress and reduced work effectiveness.

The research also indicated that sexual harassment can be experienced directly as a target or indirectly as a bystander. Of note is that the bystander can suffer a stress response by way of showing their concern and feeling powerless to the sexual harassment witnessed.

Moreover, survey respondents who identified as having a disability ($n = 140$) were more likely to have experienced ‘banter’-related sexual harassment compared to those who did not report identifying as having a disability.

The results of the study suggested that female staff in public-facing roles experienced higher levels of sexual harassment at work than their respective male colleagues.

Of those who responded to the survey, only 2% indicated that they had made formal complaint about mistreatment they had received, while 40% indicated it was easier to keep quiet. The survey findings highlighted that individuals have greater confidence in their support networks and unions, than they do in their organisation, in dealing with the issue.

Sexual Harassment and Police Occupational Culture Study 2017/18

In 2017/18, Brown and colleagues conducted an online survey to investigate the implications of police occupational culture in sexual harassment and sex discriminatory experiences of

senior women in police forces in England and Wales [34]. The sample consisted of 169 senior women in policing, of which 177 were police officers and 52 were police staff. The findings indicated that where respondents perceived the culture as 'traditional' (for example, 'macho', 'cynical', 'suspicious'), this was associated with increased exposure to sexual harassment.

Police Staff Bullying Survey 2015

In 2015, the UNISON Police Staff Bullying Survey [38] received 1,015 submissions from its members. Analysis found that 67% of female respondents indicated that workplace bullying is a problem, comparative to 55% of male respondents. Of note is that the most common forms of bullying in the workplace were humiliation (63%), excessive criticism (56%), victimisation (42%), exclusion (41%) and excessive monitoring (40%).

In the total sample, 54% of respondents reported that bullying occurs weekly or more frequently and 67% of respondents were not confident the force would fairly deal with a bullying complaint. The findings highlighted that there are deficiencies in the way that those in supervisory roles treat and support police staff, and that police staff line managers are the most common source of bullying at work.

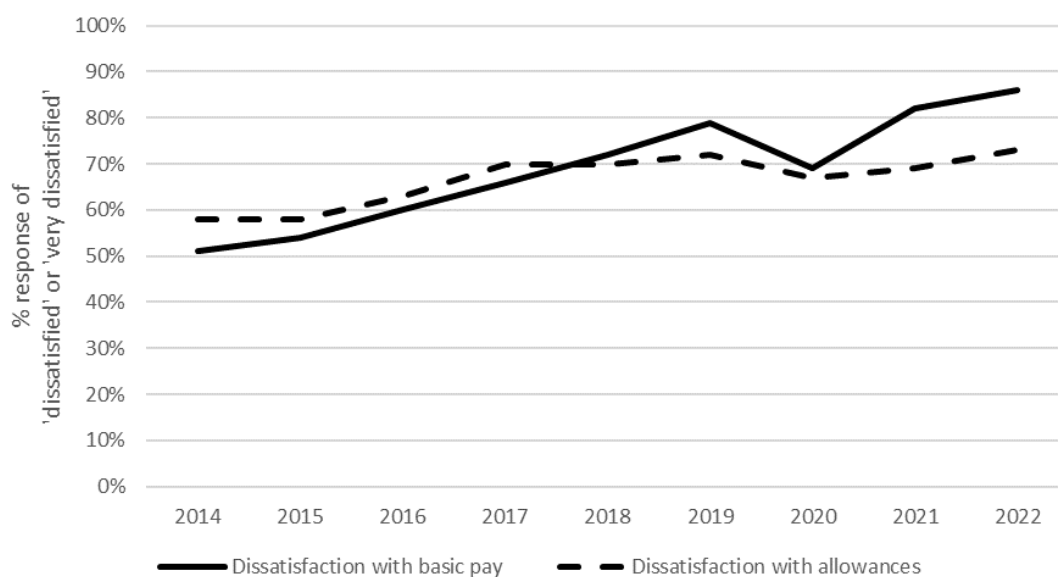
4 PAY

Research on the topic of pay has been reported by both the Police Federation of England and Wales and the Police Superintendents' Association.¹⁷

The findings from the Police Federation Pay and Morale Surveys indicate a steady increase in police officer pay dissatisfaction (see Figure 16). In the latest Pay and Morale Survey 2022 [9], 86% of police officer respondents reported feeling 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with their basic pay, 94% of police officer respondents indicated that they felt they are not being paid fairly for the stresses and strains they face in their roles, and 88% reported feeling unfairly paid considering the hazards they face at work.

69% of respondents reported that they worry about the state of their finances 'every day' or 'almost every day' and 19% stating that they 'never' or 'almost never' have enough money to cover their essential costs each month.

Figure 16: Trend for Police Officers' Dissatisfaction with Pay



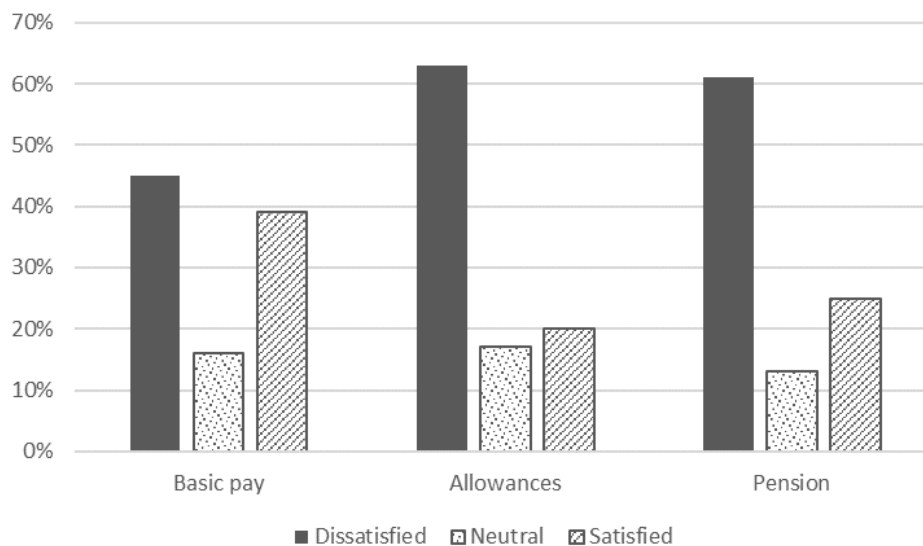
Note: Graph based on findings from the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Pay and Morale Surveys [9, 40].

¹⁷ At the time of writing, the UNISON Police Staff Cost of Living Survey 2023 has been conducted but results are not yet available.

The findings from the Police Superintendents’ Association 2022 Pay Survey are shown in Figure 17. As can be seen, 45% of respondents indicated they were dissatisfied with their basic pay, while 39% indicated they were satisfied. 63% reported dissatisfaction with their allowances and 61% reported dissatisfaction with their pension.

Furthermore, 80% of the Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents felt unfairly paid considering the level of responsibilities they have, 81% considering the number of hours that they work in order to do their job, and 65% felt they were not paid fairly considering their level of experience and training [41].

Figure 17: Superintendents’ & Chief Superintendents’ Pay Satisfaction



Note: Graph based on the findings of the 2022 Police Superintendents’ Association Pay Survey [41].

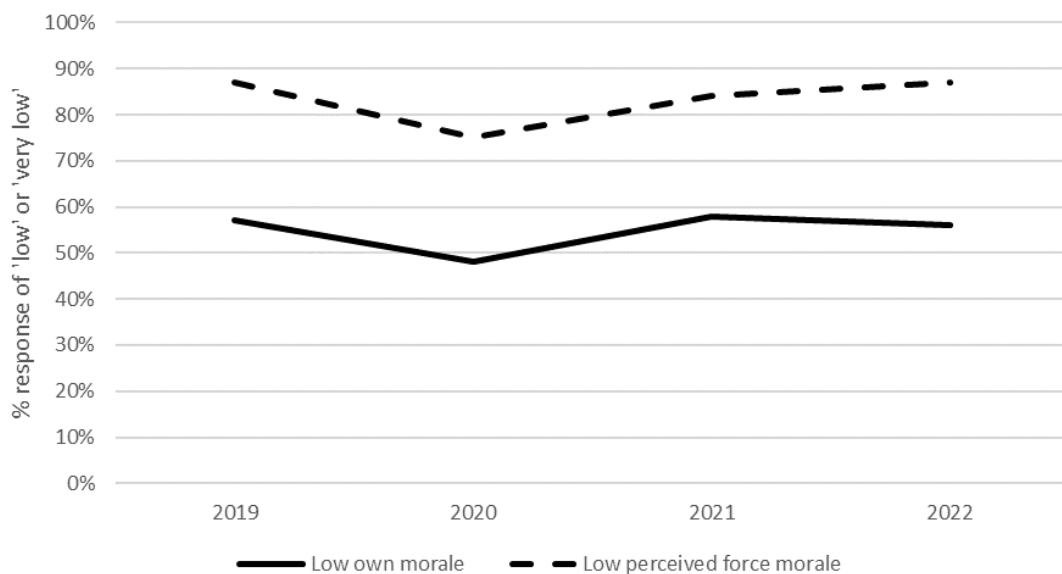
5 MORALE AND FEELING VALUED

Morale

The 2022 Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey indicated that 56% of police officer respondents felt their morale was 'low' or 'very low'. Individuals' evaluations of the morale of others was reported to be lower than their evaluations of their own morale, with 87% reporting that morale in their force is 'low' or 'very low' and 90% stating this for morale levels across policing as a whole [9].

The trends for these measures are shown in Figure 18 [9, 42]. The improvement in morale evident in 2020 (the time of the COVID-19 pandemic) is consistent with the previously reported positive trends seen for this period for police officer wellbeing in the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys [5].

Figure 18: Trend for Proportions of Police Officers' Low Morale Responses



Note: Graph based on findings from the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) Pay and Morale Surveys [9, 40].

In the Police Superintendents' Association 2022 Pay Survey [41], 33% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents reported experiencing low morale, while 34% reported having high morale. In terms of their own department/command/collaboration, 39% of respondents felt morale was low and 28% reported high levels.

Similar to the findings from the Police Federation Pay and Morale Surveys, respondents felt that the morale in the force and the police service overall were much lower than their own morale or that of their department/command/collaboration. 67% reported low force morale while only 7% reported it to be high, and 88% reported low police service morale while only 1% reported this to be high [41].

Respondents reported feeling that how the police are treated by the government and by the public were two main factors influencing their morale. For police officers, 95% and 81%, respectively, identified these as factors [9]. For Superintendents and Chief Superintendents, the percentages were 93% and 72%, respectively [41].

87% of police officer respondents also identified levels of pay as a key factor [9].

86% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents also identified uncertainty around their pension and 84% identified taxation policies as additional factors [41].

Feeling Valued

Average scores for feeling valued by the public were found to be at a moderately low level for both police officer and police staff respondents to the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey [5].

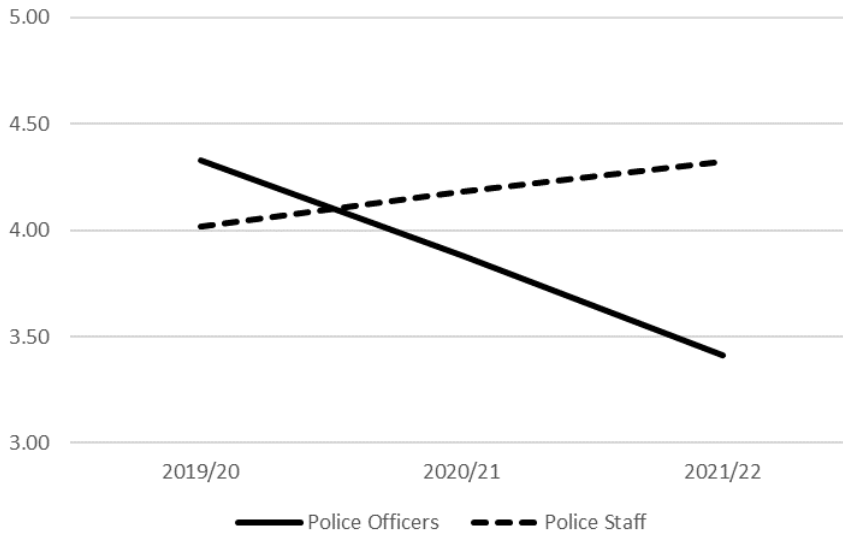
As can be seen in Figure 19, below, a particular issue is that average police officer scores for this measure have steadily declined across the past three National Policing Wellbeing Surveys. For police officers, predictive analyses indicated that a reduction in feeling valued by the public is associated with a decline in job satisfaction (see Section 7, below) [5].

In contrast, a small increase in average scores was seen for police staff, who now score significantly higher than police officers on average.

These concerns are supported by findings from the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022, where 79% of police officer respondents reported that they do not feel that people working within policing are respected by the public [9].

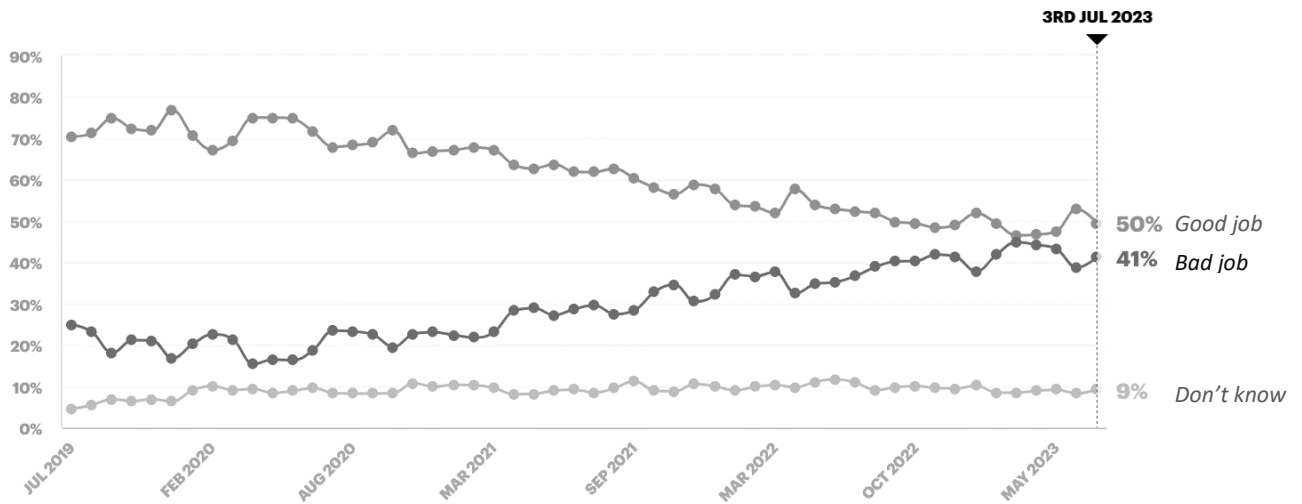
Moreover, 91% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents to the Police Superintendents' Association 2022 Pay Survey indicated they do not feel that members of the police service are respected by the public [41].

Figure 19: Trend of Average Scores for Feeling Valued by the Public



Notes: Graph based on the findings from the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5–7]. Measured on a 0-10 scale.

Figure 20: YouGov Polling of Samples of the General Public on Whether They Feel the Police are Doing a Good Job



Note: Graph is available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/legal/trackers/are-the-police-doing-a-good-job>

These findings are consistent with the YouGov polling of the general public over the past few years (see Figure 20). His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary Andy Cooke noted in the 2022 State of Policing report that *“I can’t recall a time when the relationship between the police and the public was more strained than it is now”* (page 8) and that *“Regrettably, the public is less and less likely to perceive that the police are doing a good job. [...] The police are edging towards a tipping point where the balance of sentiment towards them is turning distinctly negative”* (page 12) [32].

67% of police officer respondents to the 2022 Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey reported that they do not feel valued within the police; a small improvement was seen between the 2019 and 2020 surveys, but figures have since returned to previous levels [9, 42].

43% of police officer respondents reported feeling not being treated fairly at work [9].

Similarly, only 19% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents to the Police Superintendents’ Association 2022 Pay Survey reported feeling valued within the police service, with 53% indicating that they felt less valued than they felt 12 months prior [41].

Average scores for feeling valued by their force were lower for police officers (moderately low level) than police staff (moderate level) in the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey.

After a small increase was seen in this measure during the pandemic, the average police officer score has returned to similar levels seen in the 2019/20 survey; no significant changes were evident for police staff across this time [5–7].

6 MOTIVATION, PRIDE AND WORK EFFORT

Individuals with strong prosocial values are motivated by a core desire to help and benefit others, which influences their actions and decisions. The findings from the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey highlight that individuals working within policing across the UK are highly motivated to serve the public and to make a positive impact by helping and benefiting others in society through their work [5].

Engagement at work captures the extent to which people are willing and able to invest their emotional, cognitive and physical energies into the roles and work tasks [43]. A further positive finding is that work engagement was found to be at a high average level for both police officers and police staff [5].

Furthermore, professional commitment to policing (relating to a sense of dedication to the profession and a felt sense of responsibility for contributing to the success of policing) was reported at a moderately high average level by police officer respondents and a high average level by police staff respondents in the 2020/21 National Policing Wellbeing Survey [6].

58% of police officer respondents to the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 reported feeling proud to be in the police (with 23% reporting not feeling proud). However, 70% of respondents stated that they would not recommend joining the police to others [9].

Similarly, 82% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents to the Police Superintendents' Association 2022 Pay Survey reported feeling proud to be in the Police Service, though only 36% would recommend others to join [41].

Work effort, a measure of work intensity and the investment of time and effort to work hard, was reported at a very high average level by both police officer and police staff respondents to the 2020/21 National Policing Wellbeing Survey [6].

Both police officer and police staff respondents to the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey reported engaging in high average levels of process improvement at work [5].

Predictive analyses from the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys highlighted that when individuals had higher prosocial motivation this was associated with higher levels of engagement in their work and improvement behaviour [5].

Individual wellbeing factors, such as fatigue and emotional exhaustion, were found to be associated with lower levels of work engagement and improvement behaviour [1].

Responses to the 2018 UNISON members' survey indicated that 53% of police staff felt that their force does not encourage them to generate ideas to improve the work processes and environments in their jobs and the wider organisation [14].

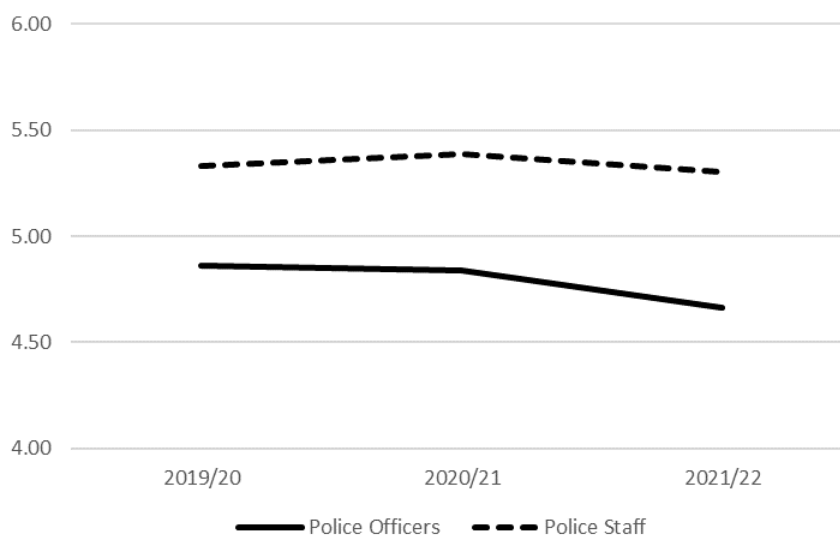
7 JOB, LIFE SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO QUIT

Work consumes a significant proportion of people’s time and represents a major part of their lives. Job satisfaction reflects how content people are in their jobs and their general emotional evaluation of their experiences at work [44]. Alongside this, life satisfaction reflects an individual’s assessment of their personal circumstances as a whole against internal standards and desires.

Both job satisfaction and life satisfaction can be viewed as key indicators of an individuals’ subjective wellbeing [45, 46].

Average job satisfaction scores in the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey were at a moderately high level for police officers and a high level for police staff. While changes in police staff average scores over the past three iterations of this survey were small, a decline in average job satisfaction scores was notable for police officers between the 2020/21 and 2021/22 surveys [5].

Figure 21: Trend of Average Scores for Job Satisfaction

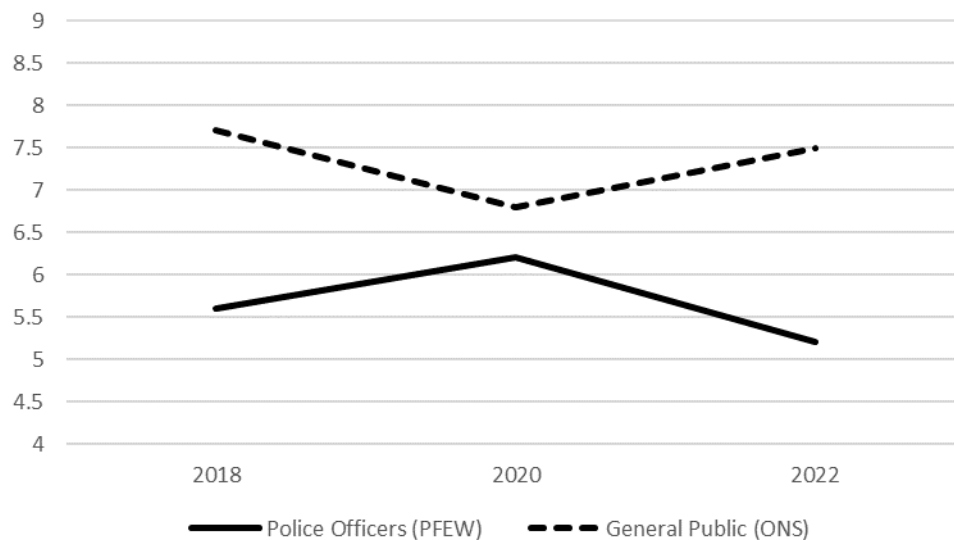


Notes: Graph based on the findings from the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys, conducted by the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo) and Durham University [5–7]. Measured on a 1-7 scale.

In the 2022 Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey, life satisfaction was found to be at a moderate average level for police officers. The report issued by the Police Federation highlighted that the average for police officers was lower than that from the general public,

which was found to be at a high average level.¹⁸ The relative differences and changes that occurred between 2018 and 2022 are shown in Figure 22, below. As can be seen, in contrast with the public where life satisfaction decreased during the pandemic, police officer life satisfaction increased. Consistent with the findings on job satisfaction reported above, the most recent reported values of police officer life satisfaction are at the lowest level.

Figure 22: Trend of Average Scores for Life Satisfaction



Notes: Graph based on findings from surveys conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales and the Office for National Statistics, as reported within the Police Federation Demand, Capacity and Welfare Surveys of 2018 and 2020 [8, 10], and the 2022 Pay and Morale Survey [9]. Measured on a 0-10 scale.

Life satisfaction, as measured in the National Policing Wellbeing Survey 2021/22, was found to be higher for police staff (high average level) than police officers (moderately high average level) [5].

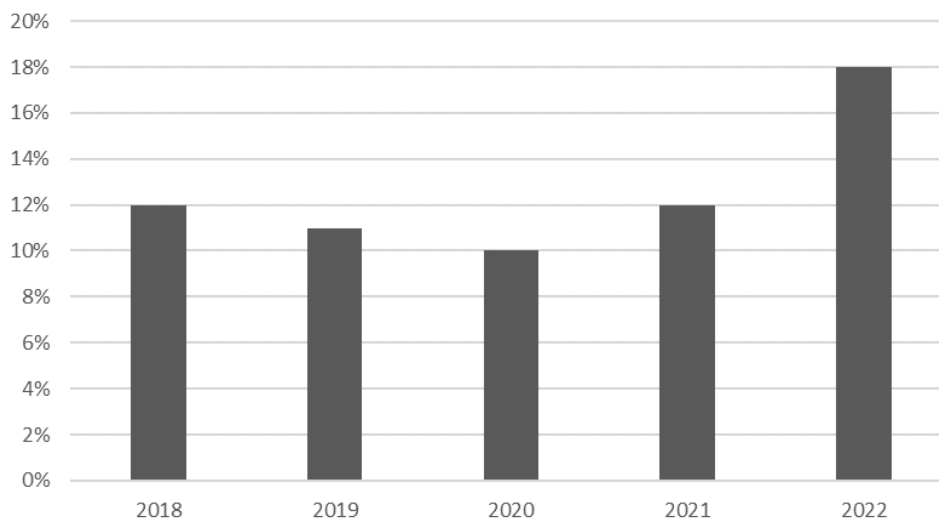
Again, shift-working was found to be associated with lower average job and life satisfaction [5].

Average scores for intention to quit, referring to whether individuals were thinking about or looking for alternative employment, were found to be moderately low for both police officer and police staff respondents to the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey, with a significant increase in scores since the 2020/21 survey [5].

¹⁸ From the Office for National Statistics, measured with the same question of “Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?”.

An increase was also seen for levels of intent to resign reported within the Police Federation Pay and Morale Surveys (Figure 23), with 18% of police officer respondents indicating they were either planning to resign within the next two years or that they are currently looking for alternative employment and seeking to resign ‘as soon as [they] can’ in the latest 2022 survey. The main reasons indicated were morale, how the police are treated by the government, levels of pay, and the impact of work on mental health and general wellbeing [9, 40].

Figure 23: Trend of Average Scores for Police Officers’ Intention to Resign



Notes: Graph based on findings reported within the Police Federation of England and Wales Pay and Morale Survey reports [9, 40].

The graph shows the % of police officer respondents who indicated they were currently seeking alternative employment or that they were planning to resign within the next two years. An approximate 1-2% appear to be due to upcoming retirement, though exact figures for this for each year are not known.

This is further supported by the findings within the Police Superintendents’ Association 2022 Pay Survey, where 50% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents indicated being more inclined to leave the police service than they were 12 months prior. Only 5% expressed an intention to stay in the police service after having attained their maximum pensionable service, while 3% expressed an intention to leave before being able to claim their pension [41].

The predictive findings from the National Policing Wellbeing Surveys supported that fatigue and burnout were associated with higher levels of intention to quit [5]. Furthermore, having to deal with hindrance stressors (see Section 9) and experiencing incivility behaviour from colleagues at work were associated with increased intention to quit.

8 TRAINING

National survey research on satisfaction with training and development in policing has been conducted by UNISON, the Police Federation of England and Wales, and the Police Superintendents' Association.

In the 2018 UNISON members' survey, 79% of police staff respondents reported that they felt there was no defined career development structure for their current job or the type of work that they did. Moreover, 40% of police staff respondents reported that they had not undertaken any work-related training or study in the prior 12 months [14].

More recently, in the 2021 Pay Survey,¹⁹ 54% of Superintendent and Chief Superintendent respondents reported feeling they did not have sufficient time and capacity to effectively implement Professional Development Reviews or appraisals fully across their department/command [47].

In the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022, 31% of the police officer respondents indicated that they were *'dissatisfied'* or *'very dissatisfied'* with their promotion prospects, with 37% expressing dissatisfaction with their opportunities for professional development. 71% of police officer respondents reported they had a Professional Development Review in the past year; 48% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the Professional Development Review process as a whole [9].

Only 30% of police officer respondents to the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 reported they were *'satisfied'* or *'very satisfied'* with the training opportunities available to them (40% were *'dissatisfied'* or *'very dissatisfied'*). 29% of respondent indicated satisfaction with the training they have been given (41% dissatisfaction) [9].

¹⁹ Conducted by the Police Federation on behalf of the Police Superintendents' Association and Police Superintendents' Association of Northern Ireland

9 WORKPLACE STRESSORS

National survey research on workplace stressors in policing has been conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales and Durham University²⁰.

The findings from the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 highlight that 42% of police officer respondents viewed their job as *'very'* or *'extremely'* stressful [9].

Broader academic research has suggested that job demands can be considered within the categories of threat, challenge, and hindrance stressors [48, 49].

Threat stressors describe exposure to instances where there is threat of personal harm or loss to individuals [50].

For example, in the 2018 Police Federation Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey, police officer respondents indicated they had, while in the line of duty, been the subject of a serious physical assault (50%), been involved in a serious road traffic accident (39%), been exposed to a toxic substance (21%), and been present during a serious act of terrorism (9%) at least once during their time in service [10].

Moreover, the 2022 Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey [9] found that of the police officers who responded, 37% had experienced verbal insults, 22% verbal threats, and 11% unarmed physical attacks from the public at least once a week over the prior 12 months.

18% of police officer respondents to the survey had needed medical attention for injuries caused by work-related violence during that time period [9].

90% of police officers respondents reported having access to protective equipment such as batons, body armour and incapacitant spray at all times while on duty. 81% indicated they had access to body worn cameras [9].

Single crewing has been found to increase the risk of being insulted or threatened while on duty [51]. 66% of police officers within roles where this is applicable had *'often'* or *'always'* been single crewed during the prior 12 months [9].

²⁰ Conducted annually by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University Business School, on behalf of the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo).

While previous research has identified that the demands inherent in police work negatively impact on individuals' wellbeing, the impact of stressors related to organisational factors has also been shown [52, 53].

Challenge stressors include demands such as workload and levels of responsibility, which though stressful may also present opportunities for personal development or the achievement of important outcomes. In contrast, hindrance stressors,²¹ such as bureaucratic barriers and poorly designed work processes, are barriers to growth and accomplishment and therefore cause strain while also constraining performance [54].

Average scores for the frequency of experiencing challenge stressors at work were reported to be at a very high level for police officers and a high average level for police staff in the 2021/22 National Policing Wellbeing Survey [5].

Similarly, 66% of police officer respondents to the Police Federation Pay and Morale Survey 2022 indicated that they felt their workload had been '*too high*' or '*much too high*' over the prior 12 months. Only 6% of police officer respondents to the survey indicated feeling that their team or unit have enough officers to manage the level of demand, with 88% feeling this was not the case [9].

In the National Policing Wellbeing Survey 2021/22, average frequencies of experiencing hindrance stressors at work were found to be significantly higher for police officers (very high level) than police staff (moderately high level) [5].

Predictive analyses conducted by the Durham University Policing Research Unit have resulted in the following key findings [5]:

- While experiencing very high frequencies of challenge stressors can result in reduced individual wellbeing, experiencing hindrance stressors has a greater negative impact.
- Experiencing hindrance stressors is associated with individuals feeling discouraged and disheartened, feeling less valued by their organisation, less motivated to serve the public, and feeling reduced job satisfaction.

²¹ The importance of hindrance stressors in policing for wellbeing was identified by Professor Les Graham and colleagues in the Policing Research Unit at Durham University Business School as part of the research evidence presented for the Front Line Review of Policing [1].

10 CONCLUSION

The research findings support the high levels of motivation that members of the policing workforce have to serve the public, despite their sense of being valued by the public declining. Workloads are high and, while police officers and staff find their work meaningful, the trends for satisfaction at work and intention to resign are showing adverse trends. This is particularly the case for police officers, where the average scores for job satisfaction have recently sharply decreased, while intention to resign has shown a sharp increase.

The key research findings consistently indicate that wellbeing is a major issue for many individuals across the policing workforce as they face high levels of threat, emotionally demanding situations, high workloads, and barriers to them doing their jobs well.

Constables and Sergeants have the lowest levels of wellbeing.

A sharp decline in average wellbeing is evident after two years in service for police officers.

The research findings support that inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment are persistent issues in UK policing.

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APPENDIX A - RESEARCH REPORTS EXAMINED IN THIS REVIEW

The Police Federation of England and Wales

PFEW (2022) *Pay and Morale Survey 2022 – Headline Report*. R104/2022. Police Federation of England and Wales. Available at: <https://www.polfed.org/media/18245/pay-and-morale-2022-headline-report.pdf>²²

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²² The PFEW Pay and Morale survey and Demand, Capacity and Welfare survey was combined into one in 2022.

- Elliott-Davies, M. (2021) *Demand, Capacity & Welfare Survey 2020 – The Impact of COVID-19*. R051/2021. Police Federation of England and Wales. Available at: https://www.polfed.org/media/16633/dcw_covid-11-02-21-v1.pdf
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The Police Superintendents' Association

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Durham University Business School Policing Research Unit

Graham, L., Plater, M. and Brown, N. (2022) *National Policing Wellbeing Survey 2021 - Summary of Evidence and Insights*. Durham University. Available at:

<https://www.oscarkilo.org.uk/news/national-police-wellbeing-survey-2021-results>²³

Graham, L., Plater, M., Brown, N. and Gracey, S. (2021) *National Policing Wellbeing Survey 2020 - Summary of Evidence and Insights*. Durham University. Available at:

<https://www.oscarkilo.org.uk/resources/national-wellbeing-survey/2020-national-wellbeing-survey>

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Graham, L., Plater, M., Brown, N., Zheng, Y. and Gracey, S. (2019) *Research into Workplace Factors, Well-being, Attitudes and Behaviour in Policing: Summary of Evidence and Insights*.

Durham University. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/front-line-policing-review>²⁵

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

HMICFRS (2022) *An Inspection of Vetting, Misconduct and Misogyny in the Police Service*. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. Available at:

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Cain, P. (2019) *National Police Chiefs' Council: Understanding Disproportionality in Police Complaint & Misconduct Cases for BAME Police Officers & Staff*. Available at:

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/publications/All-publications/>

²³ The National Policing Wellbeing Surveys have been conducted annually by the Policing Research Unit at Durham University Business School, on behalf of the National Police Wellbeing Service (Oscar Kilo). The latest survey has recently been conducted, with results expected to be available later this year (2023).

²⁴ Conducted following the request of the National Police Chief Council (NPCC) Lead for Workforce Representation and Diversity.

²⁵ Research evidence presented for the Front Line Review of Policing

Kantar Public, The Police Uplift Programme

Kantar Public (2022) *Our Black Workforce Survey 2022*. Available at:

<https://news.npcc.police.uk/releases/our-black-workforce-survey-were-listening-to-make-change>

Cambridge University, on behalf of Police Care UK

Brewin, C.R., Miller, J.K., Soffia, M., Peart, A. and Burchell, B. (2022) *Post-traumatic stress disorder and complex post-traumatic stress disorder in UK police officers*, *Psychological Medicine*, 52(7), pp. 1287–1295.

Academic articles by Professor Jennifer Brown and colleagues

Brown, J., Fleming, J., Silvestri, M., Linton, K. and Gouseti, I. (2019) *Implications of police occupational culture in discriminatory experiences of senior women in police forces in England and Wales*, *Policing and Society*, 29(2), pp. 121–136. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2018.1540618>.

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