

PFEW Officer Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey 2020 West Mercia Police January 2021

Author: Natalie Wellington

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
INTRODUCTION	3
RESPONSE RATES AND DEMOGRAPHICS	4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS	7
2. DEMAND	9
3. CAPACITY.....	10
4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING	11
5. ABSENCE BEHAVIOUR	14
6. VIOLENCE AND PHYSICAL INJURIES	15
7. ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	17
8. COVID-19 CRISIS.....	18
REFERENCES.....	20

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

The Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey is a biennial survey that started in 2016. This was in response to unprecedented budgetary cuts and a 14% fall in officer numbers over a seven year period from a high of 142,056 in 2009 to 122,748 in March 2016.ⁱ Evidence from a focus group study conducted by the PFEWⁱⁱ also highlighted that these reductions may have been having a negative effect on officers' individual wellbeing. It was within this context that the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) began a biennial Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey. The 2020 PFEW Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey is the third iteration of the survey. Due to the current global health crisis we have included questions specific to COVID-19, in order to help us to better understand the impacts of working within the police service during this crisis and officers' experiences on the ground. We have reported personal impacts in a specific section and organisational impacts are reported at contextually appropriate points throughout the report, to enable comparisons with other relevant items (for example we have included the results for the question asking whether COVID-19 has had an impact on single-crewing within the same section as the results for the question regarding frequency of single-crewing).

This report provides a summary of responses to key questions from the 2020 PFEW Officer Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey from respondents in West Mercia Police.

Where appropriate, details of average responses from previous years, or the police service as a whole, are also presented.¹ However, differences across these figures have not been tested to assess whether they are statistically significant;² therefore, any and all differences reported are for guidance only and must be treated with caution. When comparing force-level data across years, a dash (–) is used, when applicable, to indicate where a force report was not provided due to small sample sizes.

Please be aware that the total number of responses for each item may vary slightly as not all items were answered by all respondents, and all percentages are rounded to the nearest

¹ Data were weighted at a national level on the basis of respondents' force to ensure that each force were proportionally represented within the national sample; no weightings were applied at a force level. More information about weightings can be found in the 2020 Technical Annex R098/2020.

² As all the data are derived from samples of the population, rather than the whole population, percentage figures calculated are strictly speaking estimates, rather than exact measures. This means that every figure has a margin of error associated with it. Hence a very small percentage difference year on year may be due to sampling, rather than to actual changes.

whole number. In addition, the actual differences between any and all groups may be quite small, and these details should be considered when interpreting the data.

RESPONSE RATES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey responses were gathered over a seven-week period between October and November 2020. All officers of the federated ranks in England and Wales were eligible to participate. Analyses were conducted on a sample of 12,471 responses drawn from all 43 forces across England and Wales. The national response rate for the 2020 survey was 10%.

Overall, 3% of respondents (n=423) to the survey declined to state which force they belonged to. These responses have been included within the national data but are excluded from force-level analyses.³

381 responses were received from West Mercia Police, representing a response rate of around 17% (based on March 2020 Home Office figures of officer headcount).ⁱⁱⁱ The margin of error for this report has been calculated using the size of the sample and population. At a 95% confidence level, this force report has a 5% margin of error. If the margin of error is less than 5%, it can be considered to be within the normal bounds of academic rigour.⁴ If this threshold has not been met, the results from this report must be interpreted with caution.

61% of responses from West Mercia Police were received from male officers and 36% of responses were from female officers. The other 3% preferred not to say or identified in another way. In regards to rank, 77% of respondents from West Mercia Police were Constables, 16% were Sergeants, 7% were Inspectors, and 1% were Chief Inspectors. 3% of responses from West Mercia Police were received from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) officers.

³ Please see the 2020 Technical Annex R098/2020 for excluded cases.




⁴ The generally accepted academic standards is a 95% confidence level with a 5% (or less) margin of error.

INFOGRAPHIC



Who responded?

381 responses were received from West Mercia Police, representing a 17% response rate.

Gender		Rank 
 36% of responses were received from female officers	 61% of responses were received from male officers	77% of responses were from Constables 16% of responses were from Sergeants 7% of responses were from Inspectors 1% of responses were from Chief inspectors



Key Findings



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **381** responses were received from West Mercia Police, representing a response rate of around **17%**.
- The average (mean) rating for **overall job satisfaction** for respondents was **5/10**.
- **74%** reported being **single-crewed** *often* or *always* and **17%** reported being **single-crewed** *more often* due to **COVID-19**.
- **45%** of respondents reported *never* or *rarely* being able to take their **full rest break entitlement**; *lower than* the proportion in 2018 (61%).
- **63%** of respondents reported that their **workload** is currently *too high*, or *much too high*; *lower than* the proportion in 2018 (81%).
- **71%** of respondents said there **weren't enough officers in their team/unit** to do the **job properly**.
- The average (mean) **overall life satisfaction** rating was **6/10**. This can be compared to the national average of 6/10.
- **71%** of respondents indicated that their **overall health** was *good* or *very good*.
- **39%** of respondents said that they viewed their job as *very* or *extremely stressful*. This was *lower than* the proportion in 2018 (55%).
- **81%** of respondents indicated that they had **experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing** over the last 12 months.
- **21%** of respondents reported that they had suffered **one or more injuries** that required medical attention as a result of **work-related violence** in the last year.
- **14%** of respondents reported that they had suffered **one or more injuries** that required medical attention as a result of **work-related accidents** in the last year.
- **24%** of respondents reported that they were *very* or *extremely worried* about the **impact that the COVID-19 crisis will have on them personally**.
- **3%** of respondents reported that they *have* or *have had* **COVID-19** confirmed by a positive antigen or antibody test.
- **52%** of respondents reported that they *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they **have all the equipment they personally need to protect them from COVID-19 whilst at work**.

1. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

1.1. OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

Respondents were asked to rate their overall job satisfaction between 0 and 10, where 0 was 'not at all satisfied' and 10 was 'completely satisfied.' The average (mean) rating for overall job satisfaction for respondents from West Mercia Police was 5/10 (range 0-10), with 41% of respondents reporting an overall job satisfaction rating of 4 or less. This can be compared to the national average of 5/10 (range 0-10), and 37% of respondents reporting an overall job satisfaction rating of 4 or less.

1.2. SHIFT LENGTH

15% of respondents from West Mercia Police reported that their formal shift duration was more than the 8-10 hours advised by the Health and Safety Executive^{iv} and the Police Negotiating Board,^v and 6% of respondents indicated a shift length of 12 hours or more. 9% of the national sample indicated that their formal shift duration was more than 8-10 hours, and 7% indicated a shift length of 12 hours or more.⁵

1.3. SINGLE-CREWING

Among respondents from West Mercia Police, for whom this item was applicable, 74% reported being single-crewed either *often* or *always* over the previous 12-month period. This can be compared with 58% of respondents from the national sample.⁶

Due to COVID and the social distancing regulations implemented by the UK government, forces may have changed their normal operational procedures around crewing in order to reduce opportunities for infection between colleagues. The NPCC released guidance stating that when officers are double crewed a surgical Type IIR face mask should be worn in an enclosed space, such as a vehicle or personnel carrier, when social distancing cannot be achieved.^{vi} However, some of the units may have decided to reduce the risk further by limiting double crewing or placing officers in bubbles. As such, in this year's iteration of the survey we wanted to ask an additional query about COVID-19 in relation to crewing levels, to see if crewing levels were affected by this. The findings were that 17% from West Mercia Police reported being single-crewed *more often* due to COVID-19.

⁵ Respondents that reported not applicable were removed from force-level and national analysis.

⁶ Respondents that reported not applicable were removed from force-level and national analysis.

1.4. BREAKS, REST DAYS AND ANNUAL LEAVE

45% of respondents from West Mercia Police reported *never* or *rarely* being able to take their full rest break entitlement, and 43% reported having had *two* or *more* rest days cancelled in the previous 12-month period. Furthermore, 63% of respondents from West Mercia Police told us that they had a request for annual leave refused *once* or *more* in the previous 12-month period.

Historical comparisons for items relating to breaks, rest days and annual leave for West Mercia Police, are also provided in *Table 1* below.

Table 1: Force level figures for breaks, rest days and annual leave	2016	2018	2020
Reported being <i>never</i> or <i>rarely</i> able to take full rest break entitlement	56%	61%	45%
Reported having <i>two</i> or <i>more</i> rest days cancelled in the previous 12 months	67%	70%	43%
Reported having a request for annual leave refused <i>once</i> or <i>more</i> in the previous 12 months ⁷	87%	78%	63%

⁷ Please note, there were moderate changes to the question wording and response scale for this item between the 2016 and 2018 iterations of this survey. Please take this into consideration when interpreting any and all differences in the findings between these years, as altering the way in which a question is framed may unintentionally affect the way in which an individual responds.

2. DEMAND

2.1. WORKLOAD

63% of respondents from West Mercia Police told us that their workload is currently *too high*, or *much too high*. An historical comparison for both national and local proportions for workload are displayed in *Table 2* below.

Table 2: Proportion of respondents reporting that their workload was <i>too high</i> or <i>much too high</i> in the previous 12-month period	2016	2018	2020
Force-level figures	66%	81%	63%
National figures	66%	72%	60%

2.2. AMOUNT AND PACE OF WORK

79% of respondents from West Mercia Police *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they generally have enough officers to manage all the demands being made on them as a team/unit.

Furthermore, 14% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they had enough time to engage in proactive policing in their team/unit. An historical comparison for both national and local proportions for this item are displayed in *Table 3* below.

Table 3: Proportion of respondents reporting that they <i>agreed</i> or <i>strongly agreed</i> that they had enough time to engage in proactive policing in their team/unit	2016	2018	2020
Force-level figures	13%	7%	14%
National figures	13%	9%	14%

3. CAPACITY

3.1. MINIMUM OFFICER STAFFING

60% of respondents from West Mercia Police indicated that their team or unit had a minimum officer staffing level.

Among respondents whose team or unit had a minimum officer staffing level, 16% indicated that this level was *never* or *rarely* achieved.

Respondents were asked how often minimum staffing levels have been met compared to before the COVID-19 crisis. 22% reported minimum staffing levels being met *less frequently* compared to before the COVID-19 crisis.

3.2. OFFICER STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

61% of respondents *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that the way officer staffing levels are determined in their team/unit seems to be effective. Historical comparisons for this item and one other key item, relating to capacity to deal with demand for West Mercia Police, are provided in *Table 4* below.

Table 4: Force level figures for key items relating to capacity

Statements	Proportion of respondents who disagreed with the statement ...		
	2016	2018	2020
The way officer staffing levels are determined in my team/unit seems to be effective	58%	85%	61%
There are enough officers in my team/unit for me to do my job properly	65%	88%	71%

4. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

4.1. OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION AND WORTHWHILENESS

Respondents were asked to rate their overall life satisfaction on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 was 'Not at all satisfied' and 10 was 'Completely satisfied'. Furthermore, respondents were also asked to rate how worthwhile they feel the things they do in their life are on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 was 'Not at all worthwhile' and 10 was 'Completely worthwhile'. These two items replicate the overall life satisfaction and overall worthwhileness questions posed within the Annual Population Survey by the Office for National Statistics (UK) and were included in the Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey to enable benchmarking against the general population.^{vii}

The average (mean) overall life satisfaction rating for the general population was 7 out of 10. The average (mean) rating for West Mercia Police was 6 out of 10, with 25% of respondents reporting a low overall life satisfaction rating of 4 or less. These results can be compared to the national average of 6/10, with 23% of respondents reporting a low overall life satisfaction rating of 4 or less.

The average (mean) overall worthwhileness rating for the general population was 7 out of 10. The average (mean) rating for West Mercia Police was 7 out of 10, with 20% of respondents reporting a low overall worthwhileness rating of 4 or less. These results can be compared to the national average of 7/10, with 18% of respondents reporting a low overall worthwhileness rating of 4 or less.

4.2. OVERALL PHYSICAL HEALTH

Respondents were asked to rate their overall health on a scale from *very good* to *very poor*. An historical comparison for both national and local proportions for this item are in *Table 5* below.

Table 5: Self-rated overall physical health		2016	2018	2020
Force-level figures	<i>Poor or very poor</i>	4%	5%	11%
	<i>Neither good nor poor</i>	25%	18%	18%
	<i>Good or very good</i>	71%	77%	71%
National figures	<i>Poor or very poor</i>	12%	7%	9%
	<i>Neither good nor poor</i>	23%	17%	20%
	<i>Good or very good</i>	65%	77%	71%

4.3. SINGLE-ITEM INDICATORS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

4.3.1. ANXIETY AND HAPPINESS

Overall anxiety was measured using a single-item measure. Respondents were asked to rate how anxious they had felt the day before on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 was *'Not at all anxious'* and 10 was *'Completely anxious'*. Overall happiness was also measured using a single-item measure and respondents were asked to rate how happy they had been the day before on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 was *'Not at all happy'* and 10 was *'Completely happy'*. These items replicate the overall anxiety and overall happiness questions posed within the Annual Population Survey by the Office for National Statistics (UK) and were chosen to enable benchmarking against the general population.^{viii}

The average (mean) overall anxiety rating for the general population was 4 out of 10, with 36% of respondents reporting a high overall anxiety rating of 6 or *more*.⁸ The average (mean) rating for West Mercia Police was 4 out of 10, with 40% of respondents reporting a high overall anxiety rating of 6 or *more*. These results can be compared to the national average of 4/10, with 35% of respondents reporting a high overall anxiety rating of 6 or *more*.⁹

The average (mean) overall happiness rating for the general population was 7 out of 10. The average (mean) rating for West Mercia Police was 6 out of 10, with 28% of respondents reporting a low overall happiness rating of 4 or *less*. These results can be compared to the national average of 6/10, with 25% of respondents reporting a low overall happiness rating of 4 or *less*.

4.3.2. STRESS

Work related stress was measured using a single-item measure. 39% of respondents from West Mercia Police said that they viewed their job as *very* or *extremely stressful*.

This is *higher than* the proportion reported in the national sample (33%) and *lower than* the proportion reported by West Mercia Police in 2018 (55%).

Stress outside of work was assessed using an adaptation of the work-related stress measure. 12% of respondents from West Mercia Police said that they viewed their life outside of work as *very* or *extremely stressful*.

⁸ Please note that proportions for other wellbeing measures were not provided

⁹ Overall scores for anxiety have been grouped and reported differently to life satisfaction, worthwhileness and happiness. The percentage of respondents scoring a high rating of 6 or *more* has been reported, as higher scores for anxiety are commonly associated with lower individual wellbeing. Whereas, the percentage of respondents scoring a very low rating of 4 or *less* has been reported for life satisfaction, worthwhileness and happiness, as lower scores on these measures are commonly associated with lower individual wellbeing.

4.3.4. MENTAL HEALTH OVERVIEW

A top-level broad overview of mental health and wellbeing was established using an item that asked respondents to indicate whether they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months. 81% of respondents from West Mercia Police indicated that they had experienced feelings of stress, low mood, anxiety, or other difficulties with their health and wellbeing over the last 12 months; with 92% of these respondents also indicating that these feelings were caused by, or made worse by work.

4.3.5. MENTAL WELLBEING

Respondents' mental wellbeing was measured using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale,^{ix} which asked them to rate their experience during the last two weeks for seven positively framed items. A metric score was calculated which indicated participants' overall wellbeing. The higher the score is, the better their overall wellbeing is thought to be.¹⁰

The metric score for West Mercia Police is presented in *Table 6* below across years. This is also alongside the metric score for the national sample across years.

Table 6: Average (mean) metric score for the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale	2016	2018	2020
Force-level figures	20	20	21
National figures	19	20	21

¹⁰ The Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale was developed by the Universities of Warwick, Edinburgh and Leeds in conjunction with NHS Health Scotland (© University of Warwick, 2006).

5. ABSENCE BEHAVIOUR

5.1. ABSENCE

48% of respondents from West Mercia Police reported *one* or *more* days of sickness absence and 33% of respondents indicated that at least one day of their sickness absence was attributable to stress, depression, or anxiety.

The national proportion of respondents who had taken *one* or *more* days of sickness absence was 48% and 32% of respondents indicated that at least one day of their sickness absence was attributable to stress, depression, or anxiety.

5.2. PRESENTEEISM AND LEAVEISM

Presenteeism is the act of attending work while ill. This has been shown to be associated with subsequent health decline, particularly in relation to burnout,^x and can lead to elevated absenteeism.^{xi} Moreover, evidence suggests that presenteeism can compound the effects of the initial illness and negatively influence job satisfaction, resulting in negative job attitudes and withdrawal from work.^{xii}

Leaveism is a term to describe hidden sickness absence and work undertaken during rest periods. A core dimension of leaveism includes using allocated time off such as annual leave entitlements to take time off when they are in fact unwell. Findings for West Mercia Police across years are presented in *Table 7* below.

Table 7: Proportion of respondents reporting the following absence behaviour <i>once</i> or <i>more</i> over the previous 12 months		2016	2018	2020
Presenteeism	<i>Due to Physical health</i>	88%	78%	64%
	<i>Due to Psychological health</i>	61%	72%	67%
Using annual leave to take time off due to health	<i>Due to Physical health</i>	49%	34%	31%
	<i>Due to Psychological health</i>	41%	38%	41%

6. VIOLENCE AND PHYSICAL INJURIES

6.1. VIOLENCE

Verbal and physical violence was assessed using four questions regarding how often officers received verbal insults, verbal threats, spitting assaults, unarmed physical attacks, and attacks with a weapon from members of the public over the previous 12 months. Findings for West Mercia Police are presented in *Table 8* below.

Table 8: Force level figures for frequency of verbal and physical violence from members of the public

Type of violent victimisation	Proportion of respondents indicating frequency of experience as at least once a week...		
	2016	2018	2020
Verbal insults (e.g. swearing, shouting, abuse)	40%	41%	34%
Verbal threats (e.g. threat of hitting, threat of kicking)	22%	25%	22%
Spitting assaults (i.e. being deliberately spat upon) ¹¹	...	2%	2%
Unarmed physical attacks (e.g. struggling to get free, wrestling, hitting, kicking)	17%	17%	12%
Use of a deadly weapon (e.g. stick, bottle, axe, firearm)	1%	1%	1%

6.2. INJURIES

21% of West Mercia Police respondents reported that they had suffered *one or more* injuries that required medical attention as a result of **work-related violence** in the last year.

This is *higher than* the proportion reporting *one or more* injuries as a result of **work-related violence** in the national sample (16%) and *lower than* the proportion reported by West Mercia Police in 2018 (23%).

14% of West Mercia Police respondents reported that they had suffered one or more injuries that required medical attention as a result of **work-related accidents** in the last year.

¹¹ Data on spitting assaults is not available for the year 2016 as the item was not included until the 2018 iteration of the survey.

This is *higher than* the proportion reporting *one or more* injuries as a result of **work-related accidents** in the national sample (11%) and *lower than* the proportion reported by West Mercia Police in 2018 (16%).

7. ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

7.1. DISCLOSURE

Respondents who indicated that they had sought help for difficulties with mental health and wellbeing were presented with additional questions concerning disclosure to a line manager. 70% of respondents from West Mercia Police, for whom it was applicable, reported that they had disclosed seeking mental health and wellbeing support to their line managers. This can be compared with 69% reported by West Mercia Police in 2018.

7.2. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT SERVICES

Respondents were asked about mental health and wellbeing support services that are *reactive* (services that aim to help those that are already experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing), and *proactive* (services that aim to help people prevent difficulties with mental health and wellbeing from developing). Key findings for West Mercia Police are displayed in the tables below, with *Table 9* displaying both national and local proportions.

Table 9: Proportion of respondents reporting that they are *aware* of reactive and proactive mental health and wellbeing support services that their force offers

Questions	Proportion of respondents ...	
	Force-level figures	National figures
Reported being <i>aware</i> of <u>reactive</u> services that their force offers to support the mental health and wellbeing of its employees (e.g. counselling, helpline services, peer support groups etc.)	64%	74%
Reported being <i>aware</i> of <u>proactive</u> services that their force offers to support the mental health and wellbeing of its employees (e.g. resilience training, mindfulness workshops, mental health awareness programmes etc.)	20%	43%

8. COVID-19 CRISIS

Questions about the COVID-19 crisis have been included in this year's survey to help to better understand the impacts of working within the police service during this period. This section of the report specifically focusses on the personal impact of the COVID-19 crisis on officers, whilst organisational impacts have been reported at contextually appropriate points throughout the report.¹²

Respondents were asked whether they think they have or have had COVID-19. Comparisons for both national and local proportions are shown in *Table 10* below.

Table 10: Proportion of respondents reporting whether they <i>have</i> or <i>have had</i> COVID-19	Force-level figures	National figures
Yes, confirmed by a positive antigen or antibody test	3%	3%
Yes, based on strong personal suspicion or medical advice	25%	23%
No	43%	47%
Unsure	28%	27%

24% of respondents from West Mercia Police said that they were *very* or *extremely worried* about the impact that the COVID-19 crisis will have on them personally. This can be compared to the national sample, where 22% said that they were *very* or *extremely worried* about the impact that the COVID-19 crisis will have on them personally.

Respondents from West Mercia Police were asked about their concern over the issues displayed in *Table 11* below (national and local proportions are shown).

Table 11: Proportion of respondents reporting that they were <i>very</i> or <i>extremely concerned</i> over the following ...		
Statements	Proportion of respondents ...	
	Force-level figures	National figures
Becoming unwell with COVID-19 due to having close contact with someone who has COVID-19 in the line of duty	36%	34%
Becoming unwell with COVID-19 due to being assaulted by someone who has COVID-19 in the line of duty	29%	23%
Having adequate access to COVID-19 testing (antigen and/or antibody diagnostic testing)	49%	37%
Enforcing the lockdown restrictions	26%	25%

¹² For more information please see the introduction to this report on page 3.

Furthermore, 52% of respondents from West Mercia Police reported that they *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they have all the equipment they personally need to protect them from COVID-19 whilst at work. This can be compared to the national sample, where 39% reported that they *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that they have all the equipment they personally need to protect them from COVID-19 whilst at work.

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