



Research and Policy Report R058/2016

Officer Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey Descriptive Statistics Summary Report DEMAND January 2017

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1. FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

In recent times policing in England and Wales has experienced unprecedented budgetary cuts, amounting to an 18% real-term reduction since 2010.ⁱ The impact on police officer numbers has been considerable, with a 14% fall in officer numbers over a seven-year period from a high of 143,734 in 2009,ⁱⁱ to 124,066 in 2016.ⁱⁱⁱ Evidence from a focus group study conducted by the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW)^{iv} highlighted that these reductions may be having a negative effect on officers individual wellbeing. It was within this context that the 2016 PFEW Officer Demand, Capacity, and Welfare Survey took place.

This document is derived from the initial descriptive report^v and provides a national summary of responses to key questions regarding **demand** from the 2016 PFEW Officer Demand, Capacity, and Welfare Survey. Where additional data are available and appropriate, the national results are benchmarked against other comparator populations such as the Armed Forces.*

Please be aware that the total number of responses for each item may vary slightly as not all items were answered by all respondents, in addition the actual differences between groups may be quite small and these details should be considered when interpreting the data.

RESPONSE RATES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey responses were gathered on-line, over a four-week period in February 2016. All officers of federated ranks in England and Wales were eligible to participate. Analyses were conducted on a sample of 16,841 responses drawn from all 43 forces across England and Wales.^{**}

14% of eligible officers completed the survey. The respondent sample was broadly representative of the overall federated officer population.^{***} Although this is lower than the response rate attained by the annual PFEW workforce survey in 2016, this may be due to the sensitive and specific nature of the survey topic.

*Please note that question wording and sample sizes between populations may differ – for full details, please see Houdmont & Elliott-Davies (2016).

**Data were removed where the respondent indicated they were not currently a police officer or they gave implausible answers – for full exclusion criteria, please see Houdmont & Elliott-Davies (2016).

***Although some significant differences were observed between the survey sample and the federated ranks population, in percentage terms these differences were small, allowing for the conclusion that the respondent sample was broadly representative of the national federated officer population in terms of its socio-demographic composition – for full details, please see Houdmont & Elliott-Davies (2016).

2. DEMAND

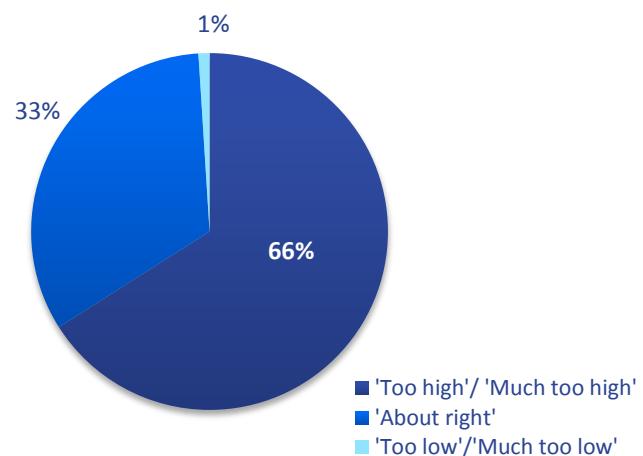
2.1. OVERALL WORKLOAD

Among survey respondents there was a widespread perception of high demand.

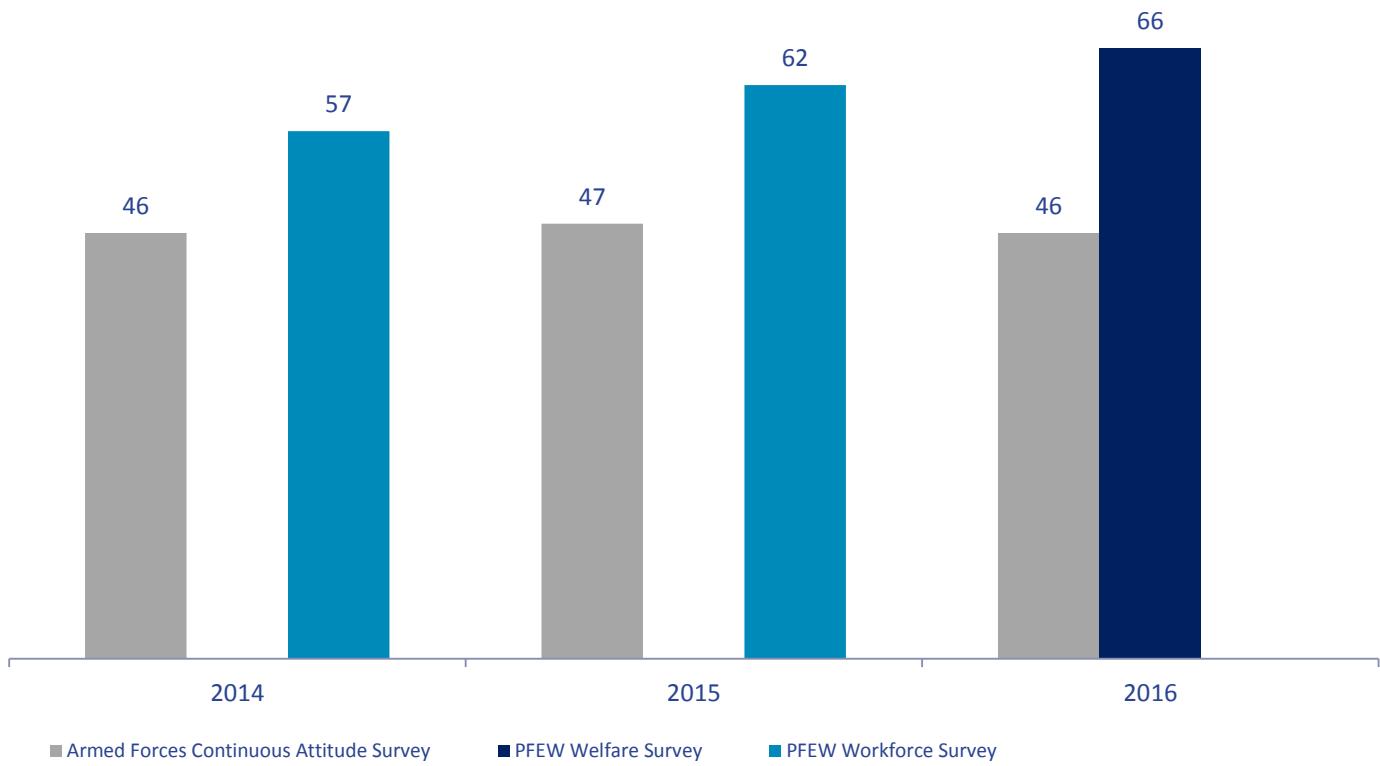
66% of officers indicated that their workload was too high, 4% higher than that reported in the 2015 PFEW Workforce Survey, which was 5% higher than that reported in the 2014 iteration.^{vi}

By way of comparison, the proportion of UK Armed Forces personnel reporting their workload as too high **has remained fairly stable around 46% since 2014**.^{vii}

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



% of respondents who reported their workload as *too high or much too high*



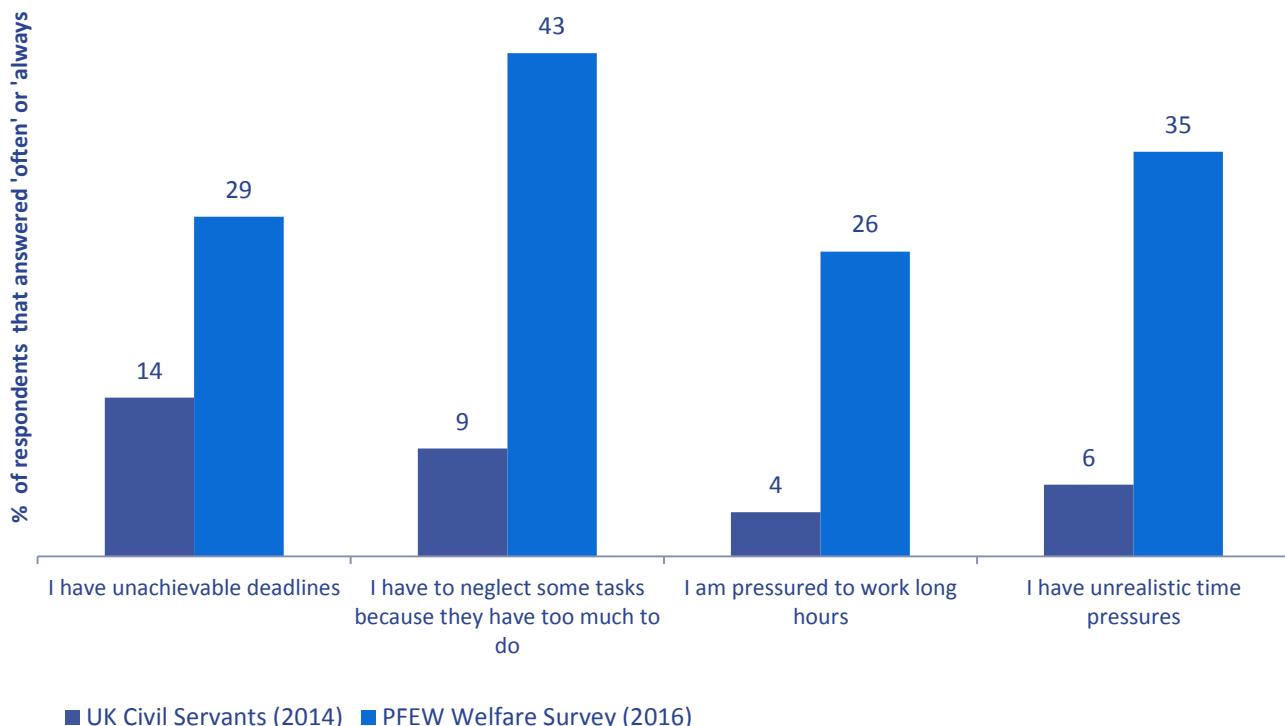
2.2. JOB DEMANDS: HSE MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

Four questions concerning job demands drawn from the UK Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards Indicator Tool (MSIT) demonstrated that:

- **29%** of respondents felt they often or always had unachievable deadlines;
- **43%** had to often or always neglect tasks because of having too much to do;
- **26%** were often or always pressured to work long hours, and;
- **35%** often or always had unrealistic time pressures.

The responses to the HSE Management Standards questions were broadly in line with previous English and Welsh policing studies **and considerably higher than found among UK Civil Servants.^{viii}**

UK HSE: MSIT Job Demands



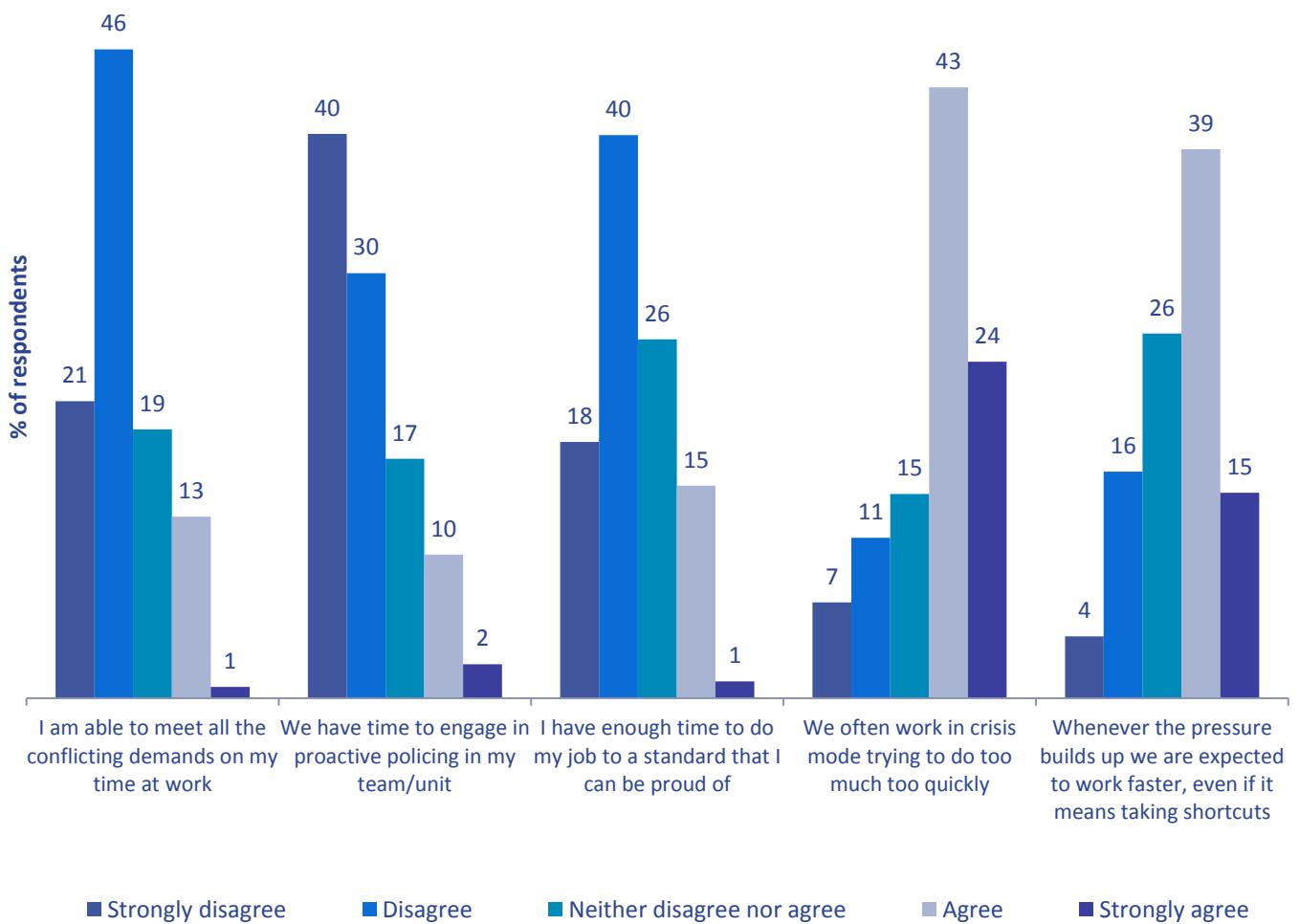
2.3. AMOUNT AND PACE OF WORK

Five items were developed for the current study to assess aspects of job demands concerned with amount and pace of work. As such, they provide a baseline against which to consider future developments.

67% of respondents *disagreed or strongly disagreed* that they were able to meet all of the conflicting demands on their time, **70%** *disagreed or strongly disagreed* that they have enough time to engage in proactive policing, and **58%** *disagreed or strongly disagreed* that they have enough time to do their job to a standard of which they could be proud.

In addition, **67%** *agreed or strongly agreed* that that they often had to work in crisis mode trying to do too much too quickly and **54%** *agreed or strongly agreed* that when the pressure builds up they are expected to work faster, even if it requires shortcuts.

Amount and pace of work



3. References

- ⁱ National Audit Office (2015). Financial Sustainability of Police Forces in England and Wales. Retrieved September 12, 2016, from <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Financial-sustainability-of-police-forces.pdf>
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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/115745/hosb1410.pdf
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- ^{iv} Elliott-Davies, M., Donnelly, J., Boag-Munroe, F., & Van Mechelen, D. (2016). 'Getting a battering' The perceived impact of demand and capacity imbalance within the Police Service of England and Wales: A qualitative review. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 89, 2, 93-116.
- ^v Houdmont, J. & Elliott-Davies, M. (2016). *Police Federation of England and Wales 2016 Officer Demand, Capacity, and Welfare Survey: Initial Report - Descriptive Results*.
- ^{vi} Police Federation of England and Wales (2015). Workforce Survey 2015. Leatherhead: Author; Police Federation of England and Wales (2014). Workforce Survey 2015. Leatherhead: Author.
- ^{vii} Ministry of Defence (2014). 2014 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey.
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(accessed 17 July 2016).
- ^{viii} In press, as cited in Houdmont, J. & Elliott-Davies, M. (2016). *Police Federation of England and Wales 2016 Officer Demand, Capacity, and Welfare Survey: Initial Report - Descriptive Results*.