

# Leavers' Survey Headline Report October 2017 - April 2019

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Author: Nicola Chandler

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# Executive Summary

## Demographics

- Findings within this report are based on the current total of 1,022 respondents to the leavers' survey during the 18-month period between October 2017 and April 2019.
- 78% of respondents identified as male and 22% of respondents identified as female. 94% of respondents were white compared to 6% of respondents from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group (BAME). The average age of respondents was 50.

## Reasons for leaving

- By far the most common reason respondents gave for leaving the Police Service was that they were retiring, rather than because they were voluntarily resigning or being required to leave by their force. More than eight out of ten respondents said that their leaving the Police Service was because they have reached pension age and have chosen to retire (81%).
- Similarly, in terms of specific reasons for leaving, a majority said that having access to their full pension (63%) and their length of service (54%) had a major effect on their decision to leave; 79% of respondents with 26 years' service or more said that having access to their full pension had a major effect on their decision to leave compared to 0% of respondents with 10 years' service or less.
- Other than reaching full pension age, the most frequently given reasons for leaving typically related to respondents' wellbeing and the demands of the job. More than half of respondents (51%) said that their morale had a major effect on their decision to leave, and the stress of the job had a major effect on the decision to leave for 40% of respondents.
- 37% of respondents said that the number of officers available to meet the demands placed on their team or unit had a major effect on their decision to leave and 35% of respondents said that the amounts of conflicting demands on their time, had a major effect on their decision to leave
- 41% of respondents said that the impact of the job on their psychological health had a major effect on their decision to leave, whilst 39% for respondents said that the impact of the job on their physical health had a major effect on their decision. Respondents with 11-20 years' service were most likely to say that the impact of the job on their psychological and physical health had a major effect on their decision to leave.

## Plans after leaving

- Only 9% of respondents indicated that they had no intention of looking for another job after leaving the police. Respondents were most likely to say that they did not have a job offer but would look for another job after they left the police (33%).
- The majority of respondents said that they would never consider returning to the Police Service (66%). Amongst respondents who would reconsider re-joining the police, it was much more common for respondents to say that they would prefer this to be as a member of police staff (75%) than as a police officer (23%).
- Respondents with 26 years or more in service were most likely to say that they would consider returning to the police service in future; 33% of respondents with fewer than 10 years' service also said that they would consider returning to the police service in future.

## Reconsidering decision to leave

- Respondents were most likely to say that a better work-life balance (30%) would definitely make them reconsider their decision to leave, with around one in four saying that improvements to welfare and a lower workload would definitely make them reconsider.
- Respondents with 11 years' service or more saying that a better work life balance would *definitely* make them reconsider their decision to leave was very much in line with the 30% average reported above. However, for respondents with fewer than 10 years in service, this proportion increased to 50%.
- 28% of respondents said that improved pension provisions would definitely make them reconsider their decision to leave, whilst 22% said that a higher salary would definitely make them reconsider.
- A different line manager was the reason respondents were least likely to say would definitely make them reconsider their decision to leave, only 7% of respondents said that this would make them reconsider their decision.

## Motivation for joining

- The majority of respondents said that interesting and varied work had a big influence on their motivation to join the Police Service (71%), with a large majority of respondents (75%) also saying that they were satisfied with how interesting and varied their work had been.
- Job security was the factor respondents were most satisfied with (79%) and for a majority of respondents this had been a big influence on their motivation for joining in the first place. Job security was slightly more of a motivator for joining amongst

respondents who joined the police service more than 10 years ago compared to those respondents who joined the police more recently.

- Opportunity for career advancement was the factor respondents were least likely to say they were satisfied with (27%). However, the proportion of respondents who said that they were satisfied with their opportunities for career advancement was actually very similar to the proportion of respondents who said that career advancement had had a big influence on their decision to join the police (26%).

## Psychological contract

- Respondents were also asked about the obligations they felt that the Police Service had towards officers. Respondents were most likely to feel that the Police Service is obligated to a large extent to provide them with necessary training to do the job well (84%). However only 18% of respondents said that the Police Service had actually met this obligation.
- Three quarters of respondents felt that the Police Service was obligated to a large extent to provide them with fair pay for the responsibilities of their job, however only 3% of respondents felt that the Police Service had actually met this obligation.
- 79% of respondents felt that Police Service was obligated to a large extent to ensure there were enough officers in their team to do their job properly, just 4% reported that this obligation had been met.

## Introduction

The PFEW Leavers' Survey opened on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The survey is a rolling survey, with no designated closing date. The survey is open to any officer who is leaving the Police Service within the next three months, including those who are retiring, resigning or being required to leave by their force.

The survey was launched to gain an insight in to officers' reasons for leaving the Police Service. The survey also aims to identify whether officers are gaining what they want to from their career within the police. Therefore, the findings from this survey, for the first time, provide information regarding attitudes and expectations of those leaving the Police Service across England and Wales. This allows comparison with findings from other PFEW surveys within the Through Career Project which contains multiple surveys gathering officers' attitudes at different points within their career. This report provides a summary of findings from the leavers' survey, in the period from October 2017 to April 2019.

# Demographics

Findings within this report are based on the current total of 1,022 respondents to the leavers' survey. It is not possible to provide a definitive response rate for this survey because the police workforce statistics published by the Home Office do not cover the same collection period as the survey data. The most recent police workforce statistics shows there were 7,624 federated rank leavers (excluding deaths and transfers) in 2017/18<sup>1</sup>. Assuming the number of leavers has not radically increased in the last 12 months, on the basis of last year's figures we can be confident that, statistically speaking, the sample size obtained in the survey is large enough that the percentages quoted in this report can be considered to be accurate within the normal bounds of academic rigour (with a margin of error of less than or equal to 5%).

The majority of respondents identified as male (78%) with 22% of respondents identifying as female. The sample comprised primarily of white respondents (94%) compared to 6% of respondents from a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group (BAME). Slightly under two thirds of the sample were constables (64%), 22% were sergeants and 14% were from the inspecting ranks (12% were inspectors and 2% were chief inspectors). Population comparisons were not made due to the limited reporting of leaver characteristics within the official Home Office statistics<sup>2</sup>. The average age of respondents was 50 with 54 years the most common answer and a majority of respondents falling in to the 46-55 age bracket (79%).

Respondents were most likely (37%) to report their highest level of qualification to be level 2 (e.g. GCSEs grades A\* - C) and least likely to report having no qualifications (2%). 19% of respondents had a degree level of qualification or above (for comparison around 45% of new police recruits who responded to PFEW's New Starters' Survey said that they had a degree level qualification or higher).

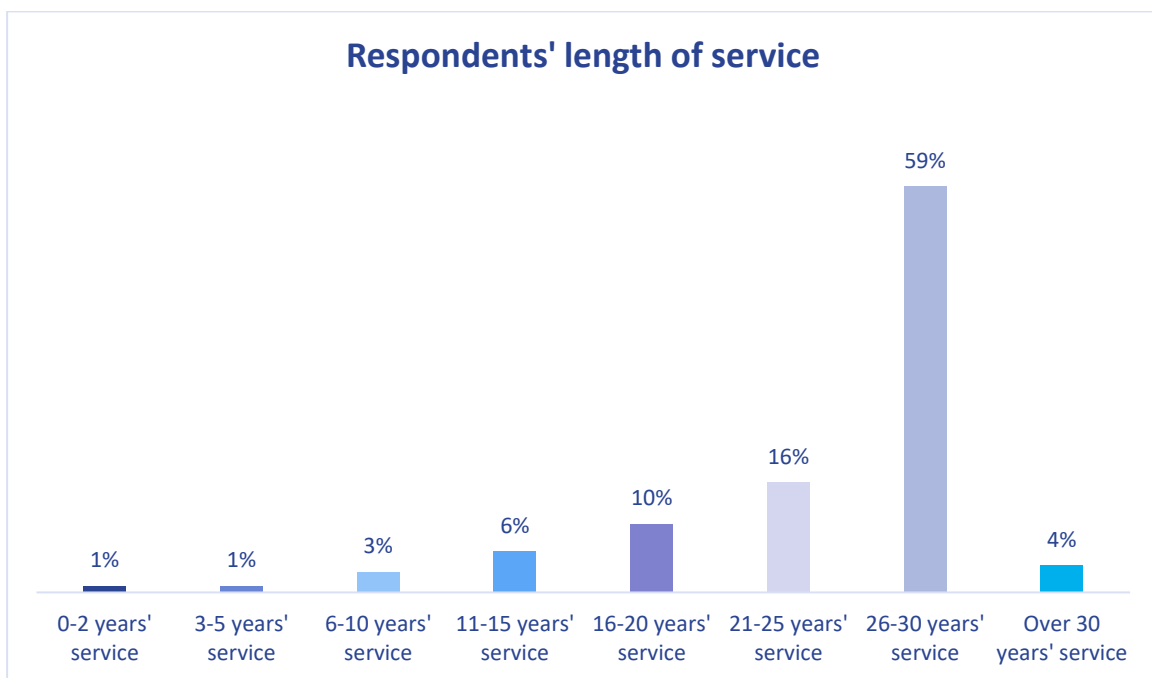
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<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from Police workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2018: leavers open data tables (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables>) [accessed

<sup>2</sup> Comparisons with the general police population were not made because of the high overlap between officers leaving and officers reaching 30 years' service. Differences in demographic characteristics of the sample with the general policing population may be due to factors that co-vary with service length (e.g. age), or due to changes in the profile of the population in the last 30 years (e.g. higher proportion of female and BME officers). Therefore there is a risk that inferences based on comparing the sample to the general population are likely to be spurious

Qualification type	% (N)
No qualifications	2% (21)
Level 1 Qualification (e.g. GCSEs grades D – G or equivalent)	5% (47)
Level 2 Qualification (e.g. GCSEs grades A* - C or equivalent)	37% (337)
Level 3 Qualification (e.g. 2 or more A-Levels or equivalent)	18% (164)
Level 4 Qualification (e.g. HNC or equivalent)	11% (98)
Level 5 Qualification (e.g. Foundation Degree or equivalent)	7% (67)
Level 6 Qualification (e.g. BA, BSc or equivalent)	15% (139)
Level 7 Qualification (e.g. MA, MSc, PhD or equivalent)	4% (39)

The majority of respondents said that their service length was between 26 and 30 years (59%). Respondents were most likely to say that they had 30 years' service (38%) with the average service length being 25 years. Again, respondents were most likely to say that they had been in their rank for between 26 and 30 years (32%), however, a fifth of respondents (20%) said that they had been in their rank for between 11 and 15 years. The average length of time respondents said they had been in their current rank was 19 years.



## Reasons for leaving

Respondents were most likely to say that their reason for leaving the Police Service was that they have reached pension age and have chosen to retire (81%). This is compared to 15% of respondents saying that they have resigned of their own accord and have not yet reached pension age, 3% saying they are being required to leave by their force and 2% saying that they have taken voluntary exit<sup>3</sup>.

When broken down by length of service, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of those with more years' service are leaving the police because they have reached pension age. This is because currently, police officers typically serve for 30 years. However, police officers are also eligible to voluntarily retire before this 30-year period at an age which is set by an officer's respective pension scheme. This means that if respondents have joined the service later in life, they are likely to reach this voluntary retirement age sooner in service. This explains why there are 83% of respondents with between 21- and 25-years' service and 37% of respondents with between 11- and 20-years' service who said they have reached pension age and have chosen to retire despite not serving in the police for 30 years.

Reason for leaving	10 years' service or less	11-20 years' service	21 - 25 years' service	26 years' service or more
<b>I have resigned of my own accord and have not yet reached pension age</b>	88%	51%	8%	2%
<b>I have taken voluntary exit</b>	3%	2%	5%	1%
<b>I have reached pension age and have chosen to retire</b>	8%	37%	83%	97%
<b>I am being required to leave by my force</b>	3%	9%	4%	1%

<sup>3</sup> The most recent Home Office data on police leavers (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2018> [accessed 21 May 2019]) puts the proportion of voluntary leavers (including voluntary resignations and those on voluntary exit schemes) at 29%, compared to 17% of Leavers' Survey respondents. As such voluntary leavers may be under-represented within the survey, however a decision was made not to weight the data because the collection periods for the two datasets do not correspond exactly.



Respondents were asked about the specific factors that influenced their decision to leave the Police Service. We have grouped these factors into six separate categories: **pay and benefits, welfare, job demands, officers' role, the treatment they had received and personal and professional development.**

Most common reasons respondents said had a major effect on their decision to leave	% (N)
I now have access to my full pension	63% (509)
The length of my service	54% (443)
My morale	51% (404)
How the police overall are treated	44% (135)
The level of my pension	44% (356)
The effect of the job on my family/personal life	42% (338)
My job satisfaction	40% (124)
My psychological health	41% (325)
The stress of my job	40% (318)
How change is managed within the police	39% (317)
My physical health	39% (311)

Respondents’ top three reasons for leaving have been ranked by length of service. This helps to highlight what the differences in reasons for leaving may be between respondents who have been in the police service for different lengths of time. Specifically, this analysis allows us to see that whilst reasons relating to pension are the reasons most often given for leaving amongst respondents with more years’ service, factors such as morale and job satisfaction are more prominent amongst respondents with fewer years’ service.

	Had a major effect on decision to leave - Reason 1	Had a major effect on decision to leave – Reason 2	Had a major effect on decision to leave – Reason 3
<b>10 years’ service or less</b>	Satisfaction in the job (93%)	Morale (82%)	Number of officers available to meet demands placed on team/unit (66%)
<b>11-20 years’ service</b>	How the police as a whole are treated (73%)	Morale (72%)	Satisfaction in the job (67%)
<b>21-25 years’ service</b>	Morale (60%)	Access to full pension (58%)	The impact of the job on family/personal life (50%)
<b>26 years’ service or more</b>	Access to full pension (79%)	Length of service (71%)	Level of pension (49%)

## Pay and benefits

Respondents were most likely to say that having access to their full pension had a major effect on their decision to leave (63%), with 44% saying that the level of their pension had a major effect on their decision to leave. These findings may be somewhat expected considering the length of service of most respondents; for example, 79% of respondents with 26 years' service or more said that having access to their full pension had a major effect on their decision to leave compared to 0% of respondents with 10 years' service or less.

This is compared to only 14% of respondents who said that their basic pay, and 12% of respondents who said that their allowances had a major effect on their decision to leave. Only 17% of respondents said that better paid jobs outside the police had a major effect on their decision to leave.

Unlike some of the other PFEW surveys, changes that have been made to police officers' pensions had a less notable effect on respondents' answers; overall 25% of respondents said that the changes which have been made to their pension had a major effect on their decision to leave, with 22% saying that how these changes have been implemented had a major effect on their decision to leave. This may be because currently most Leavers' Survey respondents will not have transferred into the CARE scheme and will remain within a final salary pension scheme.

However, pension changes were more likely to have an impact on the decision to leave amongst respondents who had less service within the police. For example, 43% of respondents with between 11 and 20-years' service said that pension changes had a major impact on their decision to leave and 39% said that how pension changes were implemented had a major effect on their decision to leave.

## Welfare

Many of the factors relating to welfare had a notable effect on respondents' decision to leave. For example, **the stress of the job had a major effect on the decision to leave for 40% of respondents. Additionally, overall 51% of respondents indicated that their morale had a major effect on their decision to leave. This proportion is markedly higher for respondents with fewer years in service;** specifically, 82% of respondents with less than 10 years and 72% of respondents with between 11 and 20 years said that their morale had a major effect on their decision to leave compared to only 41% of respondents with 26 years' service or more. In addition, 40% of respondents said that their satisfaction with their job had a major effect

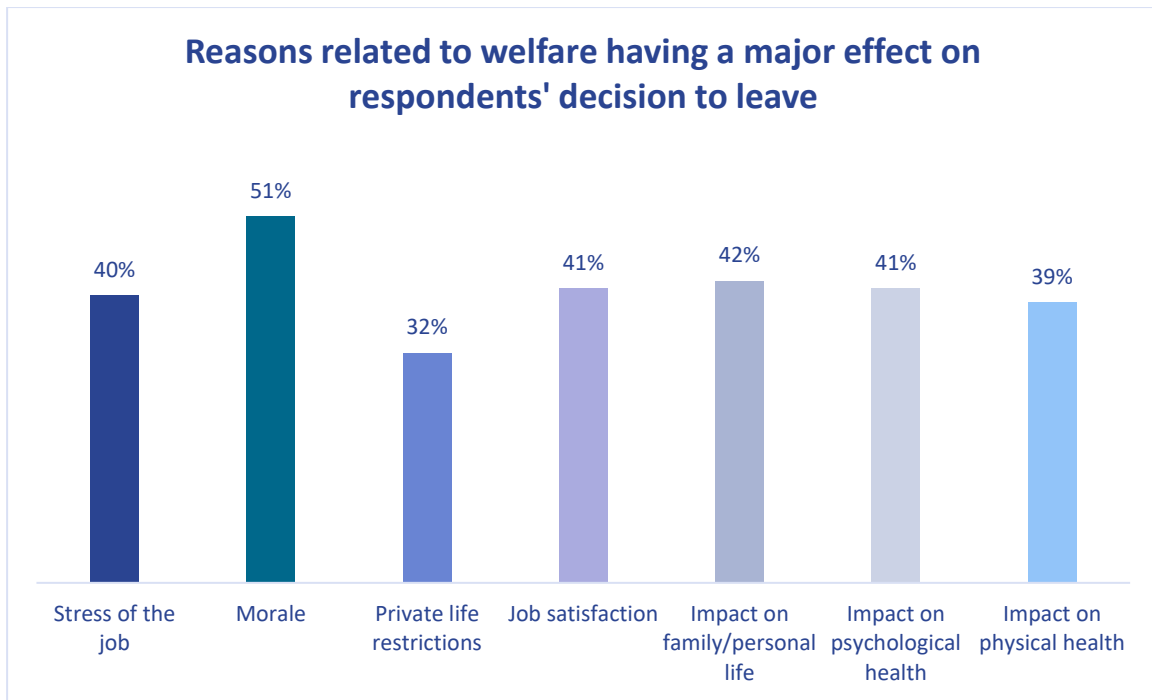
on their decision to leave. Similarly, 42% of respondents indicated that the impact of the job on their family/personal life had a major effect on their decision to leave.

Further, of those respondents who said that they intended to leave **41% of respondents said that the impact of the job on their psychological health had a major effect on their decision to leave.** Respondents with 26 or more years’ service (35%) were least likely to say that the impact of the job on their psychological health had a major effect on their decision to leave compared to 57% of respondents in service for 11-20 years.

Service length	The impact of the job on my psychological health had a major effect on my decision to leave...
10 years or less	50%
11 – 20 years’	57%
21 – 25 years’ service	48%
26 years or more	35%

Moreover, 39% of respondents said that the impact of the job on their physical health had a major effect on their decision to leave. As with psychological health, it was respondents with between 11 and 20 years’ service who were most likely to say that the impact of the job on their physical health had a major impact on their decision to leave, with respondents having 26 years or more service least likely to say this.

Service length	The impact of the job on my physical health had a major effect on my decision to leave...
10 years or less	41%
11 – 20 years’	56%
21 – 25 years’ service	45%
26 years or more	34%



Somewhat lower proportions were seen for respondents saying that the fear of future violence from members of the public whilst on duty had a major effect on the decision to leave (16%). In relation to this, only 8% of respondents said that their experience of physical attacks from members of the public had a major effect on their decision to leave, with 11% of respondents saying that their experience of verbal insults and threats from members of the public had a major effect on their decision to leave. The proportion of respondents saying that their decision to leave had been affected to a major extent by their access to necessary and effective protective equipment was still fairly low at 8%.

The ability to take annual leave as and when they would like had a major effect on the decision to leave for 22% of respondents, with the number of rest days cancelled affecting the decision to leave for 13% of respondents. The same proportion (13%) of respondents said that the amount of annual leave and rest days they are given had a major effect on their decision to leave.

### **Job demands**

Certain job demands had a greater effect on respondents' decisions to leave than others. For example, **over a third of respondents (37%) said that the number of officers available to meet the demands placed on their team or unit had a major effect on their decision to leave**, however, only 11% of respondents said that the requirement to do overtime had a major impact upon this decision.

Similarly, **35% of respondents said that the amounts of conflicting demands on their time, had a major effect on their decision to leave** and 29% said the potential of a less demanding job outside of the police was a major factor. Despite this, the proportion of respondents saying that their overall workload had a major effect on their decision to leave was slightly lower (27%). The same percentage of respondents (27%) said that their opportunity to do their job to a standard they can be proud of also had a major effect on their decision to leave, however, this proportion was considerably higher for respondents with fewer than 20 years in service; for example 50% of respondents with 10 years or less in service and 41% of respondents with between 11 and 20 years' in service said that their opportunity to do their job to a standard they can be proud of had a major effect on their decision to leave.

With regards to equipment, slightly less than one in five (18%) respondents said that the availability of equipment and technology of an appropriate standard when they need it had a major effect on their decision to leave.

### **Officers' role**

**A majority of respondents said that the length of their service had a major effect on their decision to leave (54%), although naturally this proportion was higher for respondents with more years in service and lower for respondents with fewer years in service.** In addition, 32% percent of respondents said that the restrictions the job places on their private life had a major effect on their decision to leave. However, other aspects of officers' roles did not seem to have such a major effect on their decision to leave; for example, only 19% of respondents said that the role they have been allocated had a major impact on their decision to leave and only 16% said that their opportunities to transfer to other roles had had a major effect on this decision. 19% said that their shift pattern had a major effect on their decision to leave and, in relation, 22% of respondents said that their working hours had a major effect on their decision to leave.

Further, slightly over a fifth of respondents (21%) said that their opportunity to help the public as much as they would like had a major effect on their decision to leave. This suggest that these factors were perhaps less focal in decisions to leave when compared to other factors such as length of service and wellbeing.

## How officers have been treated

Overall, the treatment of officers had a mixed effect on respondents' decisions to leave. **There were 44% of respondents who said that how the police are treated as a whole had a major effect on their decision to leave.** However, respondents who had not reached pension age were more likely say how the police were treated affected their decision to leave. This proportion was 73% for respondents with 11-20 years' service and 57% for respondents with fewer than 10 years in service. This is compared to 48% of respondents with between 21 and 25 years in service and 35% of respondents with 26 years or more in service. **In addition, 39% of respondents said that how change is managed within the police had a major effect on their decision to leave.** Further, 29% and 27% of respondents, respectively, said that the support they receive from their senior leadership and the fairness of the rewards they receive for their work had a major effect on their decision to leave.

This is compared to 24% of respondents saying that fairness of the policies and procedures that affect their work had a major effect on their decision to leave, and only 13% of respondents saying that the treatment they receive compared to their colleagues had a major effect on their decision to leave. Similarly, only 12% of respondents said that the support they received from their line manager had a major effect on their decision to leave and just 2% of respondents said that their relationship with their colleagues had a major impact on their decision to leave. This suggests that respondents' treatment and workplace relationships had less of an impact on their decision to leave compared to other reasons addressed within the survey.

## Personal and professional development

**Factors relating to personal and professional development inside the Police Service appear to play a relatively minor role in respondents' decision to leave.** Specifically, 17% of respondents said that their opportunities for personal and professional development had a major effect on their decision to leave. However, when broken down by length of service, **respondents with 10 years' service or less (42%) and between 11- and 20-years' service (35%) were most likely to say that opportunities for personal and professional development had a major effect on their decision to leave.** There was also 21% of respondents with between 21 and 25 years' in service who said that their opportunities for personal and professional development had a major effect on their decision to leave. This is compared to only 10% of respondents with 26 years' service or more, highlighting the greater importance of personal and professional development for respondents with fewer years in service compared to respondents with more years in service.

Further, only 16% of respondents said that their opportunities for promotion had a major effect on their decision to leave with 12% of respondents saying that their opportunities for specialism had a major effect on their decision to leave. Only 1 in 10 respondents (10%) said that access to training necessary to do their day-to-day role had had a major effect on their decision to leave.

**However, when considering personal and professional development outside the police; 35% of respondents said that a desire for a new challenge had a major effect on their decision to leave the service.** This proportion remained fairly consistent across respondents regardless of their service length. Additionally, 19% of respondents said that better opportunities for career progression outside the police and 14% said that a desire to use transferable policing skills in other jobs had a major impact on their decision to leave. In this way, personal and professional development within the Police Service do not seem to be as much of a factor contributing to the decision to leave as is the desire for a new challenge (and arguably with this further professional growth and development) outside of the police.

### Other reasons for leaving

Finally, there were reasons respondents had for leaving which do not necessarily fall in to the categories above. Specifically, 13% of respondents said that there has been a change in their family/personal circumstances and that this had had a major effect on their decision to leave. Further, 11% said that the length of their commute has a major effect on their decision to leave with 4% saying that they were relocating and that this had a major effect on their decision to leave. Only 5% of respondents said that their force not being able to accommodate their preferred working pattern had a major effect on their decision to leave.

### Open text responses

Respondents were asked to list their **top three reasons** for leaving the police. **The reason given most often as primarily contributing to respondents' leaving was retirement or end of service, including respondents who cited their age as having an impact on their leaving.** In relation, respondents also discussed the changes to their pension as having an impact on their decision to leave. Within this, respondents also discussed their **concern that if they did not leave now, their pension may be further changed.**

Respondents also said that **health reasons** had an impact on their decision to leave. This included issues relating to physical health, mental health and stress, as well as exhaustion and struggling with the physical demands of the job. It was also regularly discussed by respondents that the **management of the service, as well as managers within the service** had had an



impact on their decision to leave. This theme specifically covered concerns about the decisions made by senior management, a lack of faith in leadership and trust in the organisation, as well as dissatisfaction with the treatment respondents received from management.

Respondents also highlighted the **desire to do something new or different outside of the service** as having an impact on their leaving. This theme included respondents who said that they had obtained employment elsewhere and further professional opportunities externally, as well as respondents who said that they wished to pursue further education, travel, or to simply 'do something different' without expanding further on what this might be. Similarly, respondents also discussed life outside of work as having a notable impact on their decision to leave. Discussions within this theme covered the impact the job directly has on family and home life such as wishing for more time with family and a better work-life balance as well as more broadly citing personal circumstances and changes in their lives outside of work as having an impact on their decision to leave, although not necessarily highlighting this as a direct result of the job.

## Plans after leaving

Respondents were asked about what their plans are once they leave the Police Service. Broadly speaking there was little variation in respondents' answers;

- Respondents were most likely to say that they did not have a job offer but would be looking for another job after they leave the police (33%).
- Similarly, 30% of respondents said that they will look for another job eventually but not at this point in time.
- 28% of respondents said that they already have a job offer and will be starting a new job soon after leaving the police.
- Only 9% of respondents indicated that they had no intention of looking for another job after leaving the police.

Respondents were asked whether they would ever consider returning to the Police Service. **The majority of respondents said that they would never consider returning to the Police Service (66%)** compared to 34% of respondents saying that they would consider returning to the Police Service in future. **However, it was respondents with 26 years or more in service who were most likely to say that they would consider returning to the police service in future (37%)** compared to 27% of respondents with between 21- and 25-years' service and 24% of respondents with 11-20 years' service. Additionally, 33% of respondents with fewer

than 10 years' service also said that they would consider returning to the police service in future.

Of those respondents who said they would consider returning to the police, 50% indicated that they would prefer to return to a similar role, with the same proportion of respondents indicating they would prefer to return to a different role. Similarly, **over half (56%) of respondents who would consider returning said that they would prefer to return to the same rank**, compared to 44% who would prefer to return to the police at a different rank.

**It was most common for respondents who would consider returning to say that they would prefer this to be as a member of police staff (75%)** compared to only 23% saying that they would prefer to return to the police as a police officer. However, **respondents with fewer years' in rank who said that they would consider returning to the police were most likely to say that they would prefer to return to the police as a police officer**; 67% of respondents with fewer than 10 years' service and 73% of respondents with between 11 and 20 years' service said that they would prefer to return to the police as a police officer. In comparison, **respondents with longer in service who would reconsider returning to the police were most likely to say that they would prefer to return as a member of police staff**; 79% of respondents with between 21- and 25-years' service and 84% of respondents with 26 years' service or more said that they would prefer to return to the police as a member of police staff.

Further, of respondents indicating that they would consider returning to the police, **the majority (83%) said that they would prefer to return to the same force** with only 17% of respondents saying that they would prefer to return to a different force.

## Reconsidering decision to leave

Respondents were also asked about whether certain factors might make them reconsider their decision to leave. **Overall, respondents were most likely to say that a better work-life balance (30%) would *definitely* make them reconsider their decision to leave.** When broken down by length of service, the proportion of respondents with 11 years' service or more saying that a better work life balance would *definitely* make them reconsider their decision to leave was very much in line with the 30% average reported above. However, for respondents with fewer than 10 years in service, this proportion increased to 50%.

**Additionally, a further 36% saying that a better work-life balance *might* make them reconsider their decision.** A lower workload was given as a factor which would definitely make 24% of respondents reconsider their decision to leave the police.

**26% of respondents said that they would *definitely* reconsider their decision to leave if there were improvements in welfare.** In addition, 30% said that improvements to welfare *might* make them reconsider their decision to leave. However, 44% said that improvements to welfare *definitely would not* make them reconsider their decision to leave.

Twenty-eight percent of respondents said that improved pension provisions would *definitely* make them reconsider their decision to leave, with a further 28% saying that this *might* make them reconsider. 22% of respondents said that they would *definitely* reconsider their decision to leave for a higher salary. These findings highlight the importance which officer wellbeing and finances have on decisions to leave.

Definitely would make me reconsider my decision to leave the Police Service	% (N)
Better work-life balance	30% (234)
Improved pension provisions	28% (217)
Improvements in welfare	26% (205)
Lower workload	24% (185)
Higher salary	22% (168)
Better career opportunities	20% (154)
A different senior leadership team	16% (128)
Improved equipment or technology	16% (122)
More opportunities to change roles	14% (111)
More opportunities for flexible working	14% (106)
More interesting and varied workload	13% (10)
More opportunities to help people in the community	13% (11)
More opportunities for training	12% (91)
Transfer to a different team	8% (62)
A different line manager	7% (51)

## Motivation for joining

Survey respondents were also asked about for the various factors that motivated them to join the Police Service in the first place. This was compared to whether or not they were satisfied with their opportunity to actually achieve these factors during their time within the Police Service. This can act as an indicator of whether respondents’ job expectations had been met within the Police Service.

The majority of respondents said that interesting and varied work had a big influence on their motivation to join the Police Service (71%). In addition, three quarters of respondents said they were satisfied with how interesting and varied their work had been. This suggests that

**for the majority of respondents their expectation of interesting and varied work during their policing career had been met.**

Job security was the factor respondents were most satisfied with (79%). For a majority of respondents this had been a big influence on their motivation for joining in the first place; again this therefore suggests a match between what respondents expected from their policing career and what they actually got.

Respondents were most likely to say that they were dissatisfied with their opportunity for career advancement (38%), compared to the proportion who said they were satisfied (27%). However, only 26% of respondents said that career advancement had a big influence on their decision to join the police. Further, whilst job security has a big influence on the motivation to join the police service for 57% of respondents overall, there were differences between respondents based on their length of service. 46% of respondents with less than 10 years' service said that job security had a big influence on their motivation to join the service, compared to 60% of respondents with 11-20 years' service, 62% of respondents with between 21 and 25 years in service and 56% of respondents with more than 26 years' service saying that job security had a big influence on their motivation to join the police. This highlights that job security was slightly more of a motivator for joining amongst respondents who joined the police service more than 10 years ago compared to those respondents who joined more recently. This is in line with what we see in other surveys such as our New Starters' Survey

	<b>A big influence on motivation to join the Police Service... % (N)</b>	<b>Satisfied with... % (N)</b>
Job security	57% (519)	79% (708)
Job benefits (e.g. pension)	54% (484)	69% (617)
Salary	30% (267)	41% (369)
Opportunities for career advancement	26% (237)	27% (244)
Opportunity to obtain transferable skills and experience	14% (122)	35% (315)
Lifelong dream or career ambition	40% (363)	41% (369)
Interesting and varied work	71% (643)	75% (675)
The chance to help vulnerable people	52% (466)	62% (557)
Opportunity to enforce laws of society	47% (420)	57% (516)
Opportunity to help people in the community	64% (579)	61% (551)
Good companionship with co-workers	35% (311)	78% (693)
Friends who were police officers	13% (114)	-
Relatives who were police officers	13% (112)	-

# Psychological contract

A person's psychological contract can be defined as the obligations they believe are owed to them by the organisation, and the obligations they owe to the organisation in exchange<sup>i</sup>. The aspects that were looked at in terms of respondents' psychological contracts were content, provision and fulfilment. The **content** of a person's psychological contract refers to the specific obligations they believe the organisation has to them<sup>ii</sup>. **Provision** refers to the extent to which a person feels that they have received specific inducements or rewards from the organisation that may make up a psychological contract, whether or not they believe the organisation actually has an obligation to provide them with these inducements. **Fulfilment** of the psychological contract can be defined as a match between content and provision, and therefore the extent to which perceived obligations are being met<sup>iii</sup>. The exit, voice, loyalty and neglect (EVLN) typology provides a framework for workers' response to psychological contract breach. This framework suggests that responses to psychological contract breach can include leaving the organisation, taking the initiative to improve the situation (e.g. through increased "voice"), decreasing loyalty in the form of organisational citizenship and increasing neglect including absenteeism and lateness<sup>iv</sup>.



Psychological contract is “**fulfilled**”  
when the organisation provides what  
was obligated



Psychological contract is “**breached**”  
when the organisation does not provide  
what was obligated



Psychological contract is “**over-fulfilled**” when the organisation  
provides more than was obligated

## Psychological contract – Content

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt the Police Service had the obligation to provide them with each of the factors in the table below. Overall, a majority of respondents felt the Police Service was obligated, to a large extent, to provide them with 15 out of the potential 18 factors. Specifically, **respondents were most likely to feel that the Police Service is obligated to a large extent to provide them with necessary training to do the job well (84%), followed by necessary protective equipment (82%).** In addition, at least three quarters of respondents said that the Police Service had large obligation to provide them with enough officers in their team, up-to-date training and development and fair pay for their responsibilities. Respondents were least likely to feel that the Police Service is obligated to a large extent to provide them with support with personal problems (36%) and involvement in decision making (30%).

The Police Service is obligated, to a large extent, to provide me with...	% (N)
Necessary training to do the job well	84% (731)
Necessary protective equipment	82% (718)
Enough officers in your team/unit for you to do your job properly	79% (688)
Up-to-date training and development	79% (687)
Fair pay for the responsibilities in your job	75% (652)
Realistic time pressures and deadlines	72% (625)
Policies and procedures that help you do the job well	71% (621)
Fair pay compared to employees doing similar work in other organisations	70% (613)
Pay increases to maintain your standard of living	67% (590)
A benefits package that is comparable to employees doing similar work in other organisations	66% (580)
Freedom to do the job well	64% (557)
Support to learn new skills	61% (537)
Information on important developments within the Police Service	59% (515)
A safe working environment	59% (511)
Long-term job security	53% (468)
Good career prospects	45% (390)
Support with personal problems	36% (318)
Involvement in decision making	30% (264)

## Psychological contract – Provision

Following on from what respondents felt the Police Service should provide, respondents were also asked what they felt the Police Service had actually provided them with. Respondents were therefore asked to what extent they felt the Police Service had provided them with each of the factors in the table below.

Overall, the proportions of respondents saying that the Police Service *had*, to a large extent provided them with the factors in the table were much lower than the proportions of respondents saying that the Police Service *should* provide them with the factors in the table. **Respondents were most likely to say that the Police Service had provided them with long-term job security to a large extent (71%),** however, this was the only item where there was a majority agreement that expectations had been met. Slightly over a third (36%) of respondents agreed that the Police Service had, to a large extent, provided them with necessary protective equipment and almost a quarter of respondents (24%) said that the Police Service had provided them with good career prospects, to a large extent.



Respondents were least likely to say that the Police Service had provided them with factors relating to pay; for example, **only 2% of respondents said that the Police Service had provided them, to a large extent, with pay increases to maintain their standard of living and less than 5% said that the Police Service had provided them with fair pay to a large extent.**

The Police Service has, to a large extent, provided me with...	% (N)
Long-term job security	71% (601)
Necessary protective equipment	36% (302)
Good career prospects	24% (201)
Support with personal problems	20% (168)
Necessary training to do the job well	18% (157)
A safe working environment	18% (152)
Up-to-date training and development	15% (131)
Information on important developments within the Police Service	14% (116)
Freedom to do the job well	14% (115)
Policies and procedures that help you do the job well	12% (99)
Support to learn new skills	11% (95)
A benefits package that is comparable to employees doing similar work in other organisations	8% (64)
Involvement in decision making	6% (54)
Realistic time pressures and deadlines	4% (32)
Enough officers in your team/unit for you to do your job properly	4% (30)
Fair pay compared to employees doing similar work in other organisations	4% (31)
Fair pay for the responsibilities in your job	3% (28)
Pay increases to maintain your standard of living	2% (19)

## Psychological contract – Fulfilment

The extent to which respondents' psychological contract was breached or fulfilled by the police service was calculated by comparing respondents' answers in regard to the content of their psychological contract with the Police Service to their answers relating to what the Police Service had actually provided.

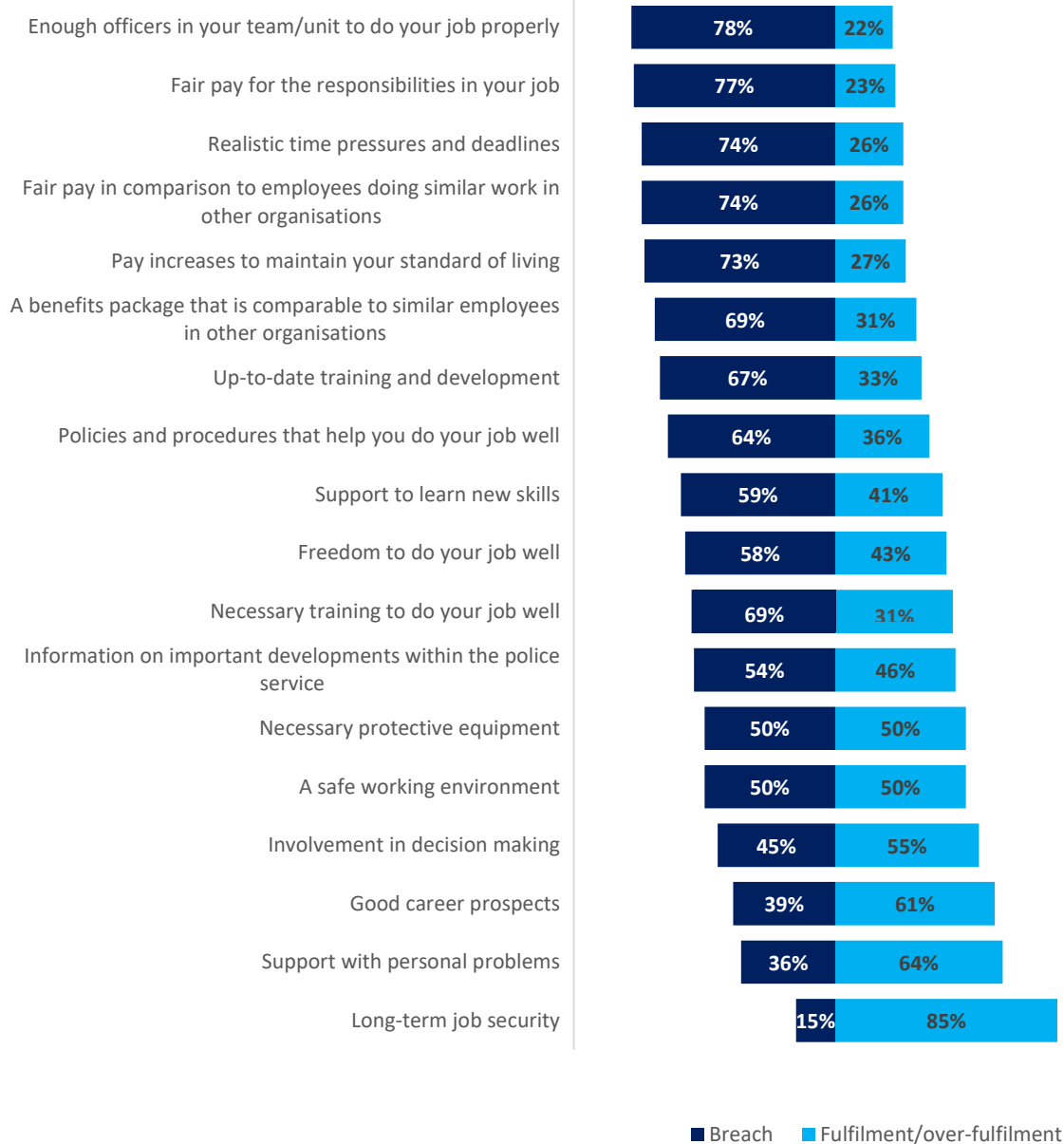
**Long-term job security was the aspect of respondents' psychological contract with the Police Service that was most likely to have been fulfilled (52%) or over-fulfilled (33%).**



The aspects of respondents' psychological contract with the Police Service that were most likely to have been breached **were having enough officers in the team/unit to do the job properly (78%)** and receiving **fair pay for the responsibilities in the job (77%)**. However, the analysis showed that respondents were more generally likely to experience psychological contract breach than psychological contract fulfilment (or over-fulfilment); out of the 18 elements of the psychological contract we asked about within this survey, there were 12 elements where the proportion of respondents whose psychological contract had been breached outweighed the proportion of respondents whose psychological contract had been fulfilled.

	Psychological contract breach % (N)	Psychological contract fulfilment % (N)	Psychological contract over-fulfilment % (N)
Long-term job security	15% (126)	52% (445)	33% (278)
Good career prospects	39% (329)	47% (399)	14% (119)
Support with personal problems	36% (296)	51% (427)	13% (109)
Information on important developments within the Police Service	54% (455)	41% (352)	5% (43)
Involvement in decision making	45% (381)	50% (427)	5% (42)
Up-to-date training and development	67% (569)	31% (260)	2% (19)
Necessary training to do your job well	69% (583)	30% (253)	1% (10)
Freedom to do your job well	58% (490)	38% (320)	5% (40)
Policies and procedures that help you do your job well	64% (543)	33% (283)	3% (24)
Support to learn new skills	59% (499)	37% (316)	4% (37)
Pay increases to maintain your standard of living	73% (619)	25% (209)	2% (20)
Fair pay in comparison to employees doing similar work in other organisations	74% (622)	24% (198)	2% (18)
Fair pay for the responsibilities in your job	77% (657)	21% (175)	2% (18)
A benefits package that is comparable to employees doing similar work in other organisations	69% (577)	27% (227)	4% (32)
A safe working environment	50% (419)	45% (374)	5% (45)
Necessary protective equipment	50% (419)	47% (391)	3% (25)
Enough officers in your team/unit to do your job properly	78% (665)	21% (176)	1% (7)
Realistic time pressures and deadlines	74% (621)	25% (212)	1% (11)

## Psychological contract fulfilment



## Conclusion

The findings from the Leavers' survey so far show that the majority of respondents are leaving the police because they have reached pension age and are choosing to retire. This is also reflected in the age breakdown of respondents where respondents with more years' service are most likely to say they are retiring rather than resigning as is most common respondents

with fewer years' service. However, separate from this was the issue of morale amongst respondents, with over half of respondents saying that their morale had a major effect on their decision to leave, increasing to around three quarters for respondents with fewer years' service. This is largely representative of other PFEW surveys which highlight the overall morale of police officers, and morale in the service as a whole, to be low. These findings therefore show that not only is this an issue for officers during their service but is also a contributing factor in respondents' decision to leave.

It was also found that the majority of respondents did not have a job offer but would look for another job after leaving the police or in the future. A majority of respondents said that they would never consider returning to the police. Therefore, although most respondents are leaving the Police Service because they have reached pension age, they do not necessarily see themselves as having reached the end of their working life. Of those respondents who said they would consider returning to the police, a majority of respondents with more years' in service said that this would be as a member of police staff, compared to respondents with fewer years' in service who said that they would prefer to return as an officer further highlighting that not everyone leaving intends this to be the end of their working life. On top of reaching pension age, it is also important to recognise the impact of "push" factors on respondents' decision to leave (versus "pull" factors such as different or better opportunities outside the police), with morale and wellbeing amongst some of the most common reasons for leaving.

Results also demonstrate that overall respondents would be unlikely to change their mind and reconsider their decision to leave with relatively small proportions saying that there were factors which would definitely make them reconsider. This may be due to the average age and service length of respondents, given that a high proportion of respondents had served upwards of 25 years in the Police Service. However, around a third of respondents indicated that a better work-life balance would definitely make them rethink their decision to leave increasing to half for respondents with less than 10 years' service. Whilst a majority of respondents overall said that they were retiring, this length of service breakdown shows that pension age and longer service lengths once again may not be the only factors contributing to respondents' decision to leave.

Further, the results also highlight that respondents were satisfied with many of the factors which had motivated them to join the police in the first place. This is particularly in relation to factors such as interesting and varied work, opportunities to help people in the community and opportunities for career advancement. Additionally, some of the psychological contract factors listed within the survey showed the proportion of fulfilment as in the majority, specifically, long-term job security and support with personal problems, with involvement in

decision making fulfilled for half of respondents. However, there were many more psychological factors where breach was more likely than fulfilment. For example, factors relating to pay showed the highest proportions of respondents demonstrating psychological contract breach, with psychological contract breach due to not having enough officers in the team or unit to do the job properly falling closely behind. This is concerning, considering that breach of the psychological contract can have a significant impact upon work outcomes, including retention<sup>v</sup>. It is therefore important to recognise the extent of breach of leavers' psychological contract, and the impact that these factors may be having on officers still in service, as this is likely to also be a factor in the decision to leave.

This report reflects only the first 18 months of data from the Leavers' survey. The research team will continue to monitor and report on these data, as well as looking at trends or changes in the data over time. We will also over time be able to provide more detailed breakdowns, first and foremost looking at whether officers who are resigning from the Police Service provide substantially different responses to those who are retiring at the end of their service. More research is also needed to continue exploring what police officers expect and want out of their career, looking at the implications if these are not met. This is the intention of PFEW's broader Through Career research programme, which surveys members at the start of their career and subsequently tracks them throughout their career.

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## References

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- <sup>v</sup> Zhao, H. A. O., Wayne, S. J., Glibkowski, B. C., & Bravo, J. (2007). The Impact of Psychological Contract Breach on Work-Related Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 60(3), 647-680.