

Pay and Morale Survey 2020 - Morale and Engagement Report November 2020

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Executive Summary

- Around half of respondents said that their personal morale was low (48%), compared to a fifth of respondents who said that their personal morale was high (20%).
- The proportion of respondents reporting low personal morale is the lowest it has been since the Pay and Morale survey began in 2014, decreasing by nine percentage points from 57% in 2019.
- The factor that was most likely to have a negative impact on respondents' morale is how the police as a whole are treated; 90% respondents said that how the police are treated had a negative impact on their morale, this has increased over the last year, from 83% of respondents in 2019.
- There has been an eight percentage point decrease in the proportion of respondents in 2020 who feel that pay and benefits have had a negative impact on their morale; this proportion was 81% in 2019, compared to 73% in 2020.
- Overall, 10% of respondents said that they intend to leave the police service within the next two years or as soon as possible.
- Respondents were most likely to say that their morale has a major effect on their intention to leave (72%) and that how the police are treated had a major effect on their intention to leave (70%).
- Respondents were much more likely to say that they were proud to be in the police service (64%) than to say that they were not proud to be in the police service (19%). However respondents were also much more likely to say that they would not recommend joining the police to others (59%), than to say that they would recommend joining the police to others (20%).

Introduction

The PFEW Pay and Morale Survey obtains members' views on their pay and conditions, as well as their attitudes to their work and the police service in general. The Pay and Morale survey is an annual survey, which has been conducted each year since 2014. To the best of our knowledge, it is the largest annual survey of police officers in the UK. This report provides a summary of key findings on respondents' morale, as well as what their intentions are with staying in or leaving the police service. Findings also cover respondents' engagement with the police; to name a few, how far respondents feel proud to be in the police, and whether respondents would recommend the police service to others.

Respondents and response rate

The PFEW Pay and Morale Survey 2020 opened on 27th July 2020 and closed on 11th September 2020. During that time we had responses from 26,042 officers, which were reduced to 25,558 after data cleansing¹. The response rate for the Pay and Morale Survey 2020 was therefore approximately 20% of all federated rank officers in England and Wales and in line with previous years.

In order to calculate whether the sample size is representative, margin of error is used to measure the maximum amount by which the results from the sample are expected to differ from those of the actual population². The margin of error for this report is <1% meaning that 95% of the time the results will be within -1% and +1% of the numbers cited. To ensure that each force is proportionally represented within the national sample, data were weighted on the basis of respondents' force³. This is standard practice in survey reporting, and is used by industry leaders such as Ipsos Mori, and in government survey reporting such as the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (run by the Ministry of Defence). More information on weighting and representativeness can be found within the Technical Annex.

¹ Data were removed where the respondent gave implausible answers: e.g. said they had been at the top of their pay scale for longer than they had been a police officer; length of time in role exceeded length of service etc.

² Unless every single person in the population is surveyed, then the results of any survey are estimates, and will vary to some extent from the actual population value. There are standard ways of ensuring the estimate given is accurate enough to be used (i.e. that it is representative enough). These require the researcher to calculate the margin of error and confidence level and ensure these are within certain limits.

³ The weighting for each force was calculated by dividing the number of federated rank officers in the force relative to the federated rank population in England and Wales as a whole by the number of responses received from officers within the force relative to the sample as a whole.

The findings of the PFEW survey discussed within this report are compared with other large-scale public sector surveys; the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS)⁴, The NHS Staff Survey⁵ and the Civil Service People Survey⁶ which includes data from the National Crime Agency (NCA).

This year, 28% of respondents to the survey were female, 72% were male, and the average age of respondents was 41 years. The majority of respondents were Constables (72%) with 20% of respondents at the rank of Sergeant, 7% at the rank of Inspector and 1% at the rank of Chief Inspector. This is broadly representative of the policing population as a whole. Again, further details on demographics can be found within the Technical Annex.

⁴ Ministry of Defence (2020, May). UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885863/Annex_B_to_AFCAS_Main_Report_2020_Reference_Tables_PDF.pdf

⁵ NHS (2020). NHS Staff Survey Results. <http://www.nhsstaffsurveyresults.com/homepage/national-results-2019/trends-questions-2019/>

⁶ Cabinet Office (2020, March). Civil Service People Survey: 2019 results. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2019-results>

Findings

Morale

This is the first year since the Pay and Morale survey started in 2014 where the proportion of respondents reporting low morale was less than half. However, respondents to the Pay and Morale survey 2020 were still more likely to say that their morale was low rather than high. For example, 48% of respondents said that their personal morale was low, compared to a fifth of respondents who said that their personal morale was high (20%). Moreover, compared to the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS)⁷, PFEW respondents were much more likely than armed forces personnel to say that their morale was low; 31% of armed forces personnel from non-officer ranks said that their morale was low.

As shown in Table 1 below, a much higher proportion of respondents said that their force morale and morale in the service was low, compared to their personal morale; three quarters (75%) of respondents said that their force morale was low, and 85% of respondents said that the morale in the service was low. For comparison, the proportion of armed forces personnel of non-officer rank who said that morale in their service was low was 55% this year.

Table 1. Proportion of respondents in 2020 reporting high or low morale

	Low Morale	High Morale
Personal morale	48%	20%
Force morale	75%	3%
Police service morale	85%	1%

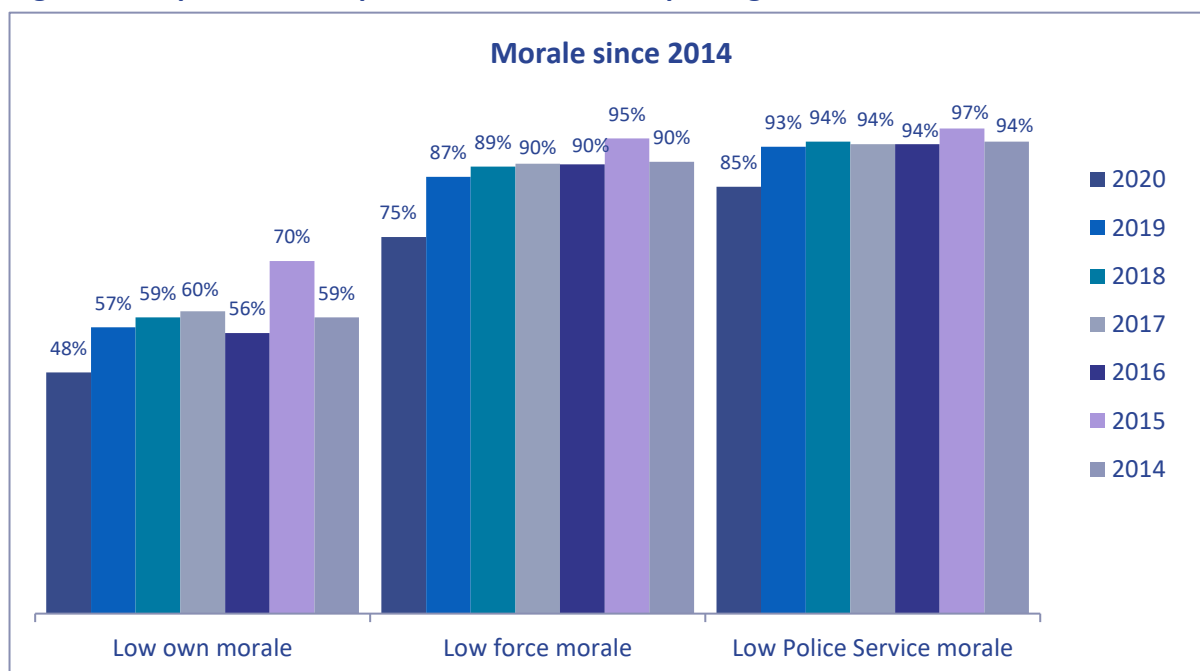
As shown in Figure 1, the proportion of respondents reporting low personal morale is the lowest it has been since the Pay and Morale survey began in 2014, decreasing by nine percentage points since 2019. This is also the case for the proportion of respondents who said that their force morale, and morale in the service was low; the proportion of respondents reporting low force morale has decreased by 12 percentage points since 2019, and the proportion of respondents reporting low morale in the service as a whole has decreased by eight percentage points since 2019.

Whilst this decrease is positive, it is too early to confirm whether or not this is indicative of an improvement in morale across the service, or a one-off finding. Moreover, as noted above

⁷ Ministry of Defence (2020, May). UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885863/Annex_B_to_AFCAS_Main_Report_2020_Reference_Tables_PDF.pdf

the proportion of respondents reporting low morale is very high and is higher than is seen in other organisations.

Figure 1. Proportion of respondents since 2014 reporting low morale



As with previous years, respondents were also asked what impact certain factors have on their morale. As in 2019, the factor most likely to have a negative impact on respondents' morale is how the police as a whole are treated, with 9 in 10 respondents highlighting this as a factor negatively affecting their morale (90%). This has increased in the last year, as in 2020 93% of respondents said that how the police are treated had a negative impact on their morale.

Overall, the factors most likely to have a negative impact on respondents' morale are similar to 2019. For example, there has been no change since 2019 in the proportion of respondents saying that the impact of the job on health and wellbeing has had a negative impact on their morale, with 58% of respondents saying this had a negative impact (Table 2). Further, there has been an eight percentage point decrease in the proportion of respondents in 2020 who feel that pay and benefits have had a negative impact on their morale; this proportion was 81% in 2019, compared to 73% in 2020. This finding is in keeping with findings elsewhere in the Pay and Morale survey (reported in report R075/2020) that show that respondents are less likely to be dissatisfied with their remuneration this year, compared to 2019.

Table 2. Proportion of respondents in 2020 and 2019 reporting factors having a negative impact on their morale

Factor	Negative impact on morale		Positive impact on morale	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
How the police as a whole are treated	90%	83%	3%	5%
Pay and benefits	73%	81%	10%	5%
Work-life balance	59%	62%	18%	17%
Workload and responsibilities	66%	61%	10%	14%
Impact of the job on health and wellbeing	58%	58%	18%	16%
The COVID crisis	65%	-	3%	-
Your pension	69%	-	11%	-
The 20,000 officer uplift	12%	-	25%	-

Intention to leave

There has been little change in the proportions of respondents intending to stay or leave the police service compared to previous years. A majority of respondents said that they intend to stay until pension age or for at least the next two years (75%). Respondents are also slightly less likely this year (4%) than in 2019 to say that they are seeking alternative employment at the moment (6%). Overall, 10% of respondents said that they intend to leave the police service within the next two years or as soon as possible.

Table 3. Respondents' intention to stay or leave the police service

Intention	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
I intend to stay until pension age	60%	57%	53%	52%	53%	50%
I intend to stay for at least the next two years	16%	17%	17%	17%	15%	13%

I intend to leave within the next two years	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	7%
I am seeking alternative employment at the moment	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%	9%
I don't know	15%	15%	18%	19%	20%	22%

Additionally, respondents to the Pay and Morale survey were asked what factors affected their intention to leave. Respondents were most likely to say that their morale has a major effect on their intention to leave (72%). Furthermore, 7 in 10 respondents (70%) also said that how the police are treated had a major effect on their intention to leave. The COVID-19 crisis had a major effect on respondents' intention to leave for 11% of respondents. Whilst this is relatively low compared to other reasons for intending to leave, it still shows that COVID-19 had a major effect on intention to leave for around 1 in 10 of those intending to leave the police service within the next two years.

Table 4. Factors affecting respondents' intention to leave

Factor	No effect on intention to leave	Some effect on intention to leave	Major effect on intention to leave
Your morale	6%	22%	72%
I have reached pension age	63%	14%	23%
The impact of the job on your health and wellbeing	9%	26%	65%
How the police as a whole are treated	8%	23%	70%
Personal reasons	69%	19%	12%
Your pay and benefits	11%	30%	60%
The impact of your job on your family/personal life	12%	34%	53%
Better job opportunities outside of the Police	26%	27%	48%
Your workload and responsibilities	18%	37%	45%
The COVID-19 crisis	65%	24%	11%
The 20,000 officer uplift	84%	12%	4%
Your pension	16%	27%	57%

Engagement

Around two thirds of respondents agreed that they were proud to be in the police and respondents were much more likely to say that they were proud to be in the police service (64%) than to say that they were not proud to be in the police service (19%). Respondents in the PFEW Pay and Morale survey were however less likely to feel proud to be in the service than respondents in the AFCAS survey⁸ where 72% of armed forces personnel of non-officer rank said that they feel proud to be in the service. However, a similar proportion of

⁸ Ministry of Defence (2020, May). UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885863/Annex_B_to_AFCAS_Main_Report_2020_Reference_Tables_PDF.pdf

respondents for the PFEW survey reported being proud of where they worked (64%) as in the National Crime Agency (65%), as shown in the most recent Civil Service People Survey⁹.

Table 5. Respondents' engagement with the police service

Factor	Agree	Disagree
I am proud to be in the police service	64%	19%
I would recommend joining the police service to others	20%	59%
I feel a strong attachment to the police service	50%	29%
The police service inspires me to do the best in my job	38%	30%
The police service motivates me to help it achieve its objectives	24%	41%
I am treated fairly	36%	36%
I feel valued in the police service	19%	57%
I feel that the police are respected by society at large	13%	74%

Whilst the majority of respondents were proud to be in the police, respondents were much less likely to say that they would recommend joining the police to others. Only 20% of respondents said that they would recommend joining the police, in comparison to 59% of respondents who would not recommend joining the police to others. PFEW respondents were also less likely than respondents to other staff surveys to recommend joining the service to others. For example, 46% of armed forces personnel not of officer rank¹⁰, and 43% of National Crime Agency¹¹, said that they would recommend joining their organisation to others.

In addition, more than half of respondents said that they do not feel valued in the police. Respondents were again much more likely to say that they do not feel valued (57%) than to

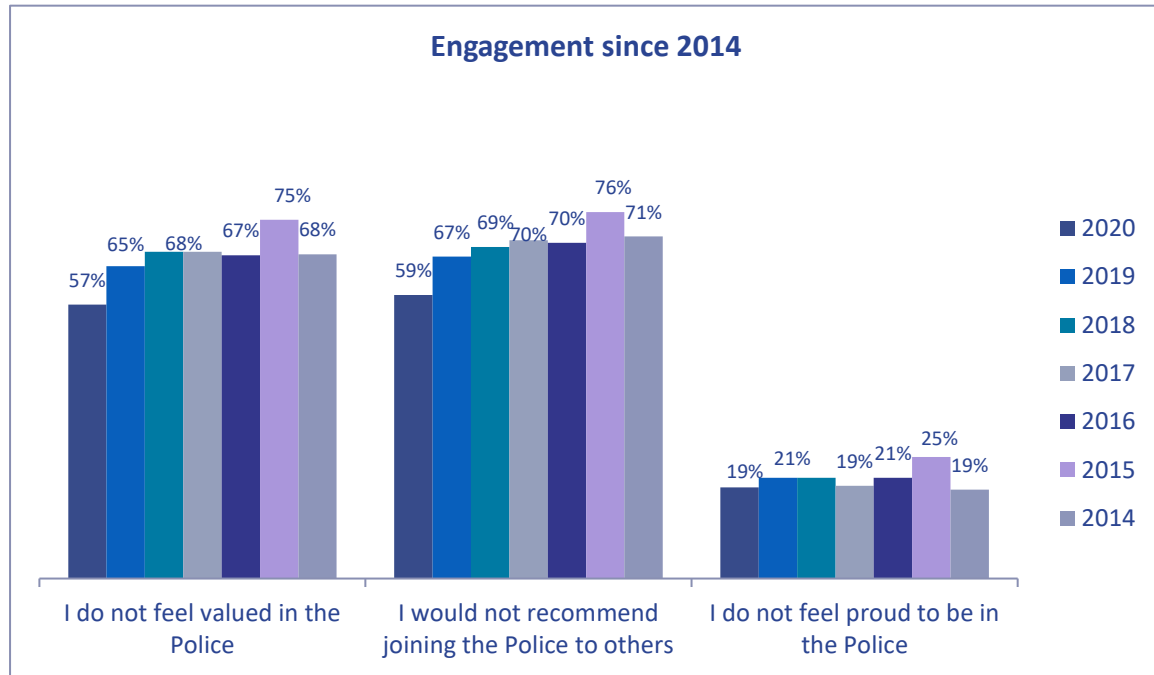
⁹ Cabinet Office (2020, March). Civil Service People Survey: 2019 results. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2019-results>

¹⁰ Ministry of Defence (2020, May). UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885863/Annex_B_to_AFCAS_Main_Report_2020_Reference_Tables_PDF.pdf

¹¹ Cabinet Office (2020, March). Civil Service People Survey: 2019 results. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2019-results>

say that they feel valued in the police (19%). As with other findings covered within this report, the proportion of PFEW respondents who feel valued in the police is much lower than the proportion of respondents from other organisations who say that they feel valued in the organisation; for instance 62% of National Crime Agency employees¹² and 35% of armed forces personnel of non-officer rank within the AFCAS survey¹³ said that they feel valued in their organisation.

Figure 2. Proportion of respondents disagreeing with engagement measures since 2014



Respondents were less likely this year than in previous years to say that they do not feel valued in the police; for example, last year 65% of respondents said that they did not feel valued in the police, compared to 57% this year. Similarly, this year 59% of respondents said that they would not recommend joining the police to others compared to 67% of respondents who said that they would not recommend joining the police to others in 2019.

¹² Cabinet Office (2020, March). Civil Service People Survey: 2019 results. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-people-survey-2019-results>

¹³ Ministry of Defence (2020, May). UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey Results 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885863/Annex_B_to_AFCAS_Main_Report_2020_Reference_Tables_PDF.pdf

Appendix A

Further information on this survey can be found in the Pay and Morale 2020 Technical Annex, specifically:

- Background to the 2020 Pay and Morale survey
- Key areas the 2020 Pay and Morale survey focused on
- Uses of the survey data
- Distribution of the survey
- Respondents and Representativeness
- Respondents and response rate
- Representativeness
- Demographics
- Analytical approach
- Weighting
- Grouping and aggregation of response options
- Benchmarking

The Technical Annex can be found here: <https://www.polfed.org/our-work/pay-and-morale/>.