

Pay and Morale Survey 2021 - Headline Report December 2021

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Executive Summary

- 58% of respondents said that their morale is low in this year's survey. Only 14% said that morale is high. The proportion of respondents reporting low morale has increased from 48% last year.
- 95% of respondents said that treatment by the government had a negative impact on their morale, and 84% of respondents said that treatment by the public had a negative impact on their morale.
- 67% of respondents said that they would not recommend joining the police to others; last year this proportion was 59%.
- 93% of respondents said that they do not feel that members of the police are respected by the government and 78% of respondents said that they do not feel that members of the police are respected by the public.
- This year, 12% of respondents said they intend to resign either within the next two years or as soon as possible; this has increased since 2020 when this proportion was 10%.
- 82% of respondents who intend to resign from the police said that their morale had a major effect on their intention to resign and 77% said that the treatment of the police by the government had a major effect.
- This year respondents were more likely than ever before to say that they do not feel fairly paid; 92% of respondents said that they are not fairly paid for the stresses and strains of their job and 86% of respondents said that they do not feel fairly paid for the hazards within their job.
- 66% of respondents said that they do not feel fairly paid compared to other key workers.
- Almost half of respondents (47%) said that their pay increased their intention to leave the police.
- 14% of respondents said that they are never or almost never able to cover their monthly essentials, compared to 7% in 2020.
- 74% of respondents said that they feel worse off financially compared to five years ago and 73% of respondents said that they feel worse off financially compared to 12 months ago.

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, cost of living, and attitudes towards pay and remuneration. Findings also cover respondents' intention to stay in the police service, and indicators of engagement with the service; for example, whether 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 2021 opened on 1st November 2021 and closed on 30th November 2021. During that time, we had responses from 29,638 officers, which was reduced to 29,587 after data cleansing. The response rate for the Pay and Morale Survey 2021 was therefore approximately 22% of all federated rank officers in England and Wales and in line with previous years.

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 population¹. 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 percentage cited. To ensure that each force is proportionally represented within the national sample, data were weighted on the basis of respondents' force². 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.

This year, 27% of respondents to the survey were female, 73% were male, and the average age of respondents was 41 years. The majority of respondents were Constables (72%) with 19% of respondents at the rank of Sergeant, 7% at the rank of Inspector and 2% at the rank of Chief Inspector. This is broadly representative of the federated rank population as a whole. Again, further details on demographics can be found within the Technical Annex.

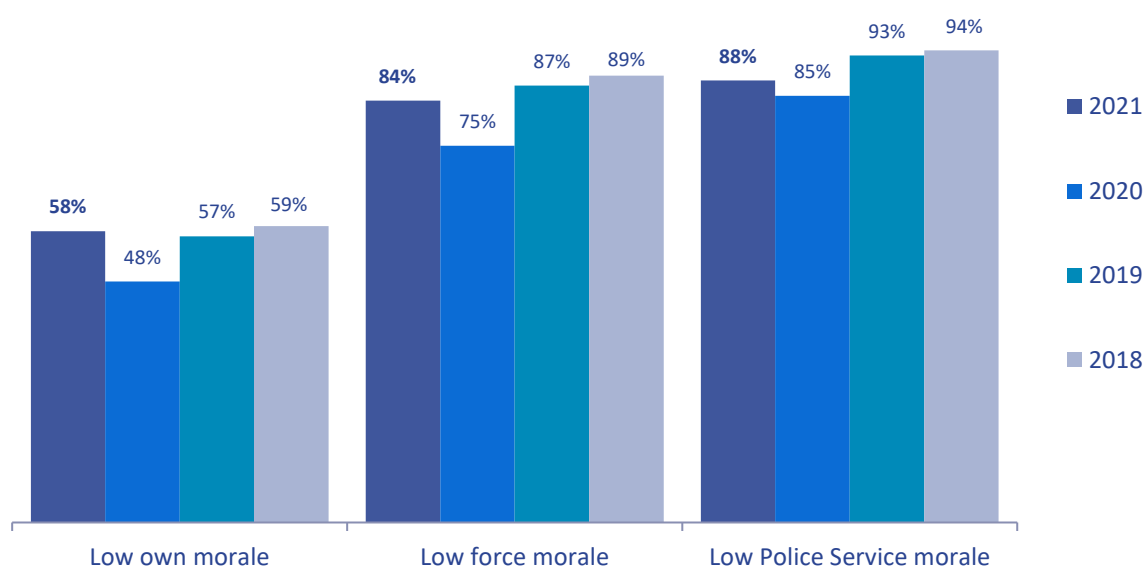
¹ Unless every single person in the population is surveyed, then the results of any survey are estimates, and will vary to some extent from the actual population value. There are standard ways of ensuring the estimate given is accurate enough to be used (i.e., that it is representative enough). This requires calculation of the margin of error and confidence level and ensuring they are within certain limits.

² 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.

Morale

Overall, respondents this year were considerably more likely to say their morale is low rather than high; with a majority of respondents reporting low morale. After an improvement in morale in 2020, the 2021 survey shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents with low morale; **this year 58% of respondents said that their personal morale was low compared to 48% in 2020**. Only 14% of respondents said that their personal morale was high. In the same way, **there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents saying that morale in their force is low: 84% compared to 75% in 2020**. And more than eight out of ten respondents said that morale in the police service as a whole is low.

Respondents' morale Since 2018



Survey respondents were also asked what was having a negative impact upon their morale. Out of all the options provided within the survey, the thing that was most likely to have a negative impact on respondents' morale was the way the police are treated by the government. **More than 9 in 10 respondents (95%) said that treatment by the government and more than 8 in 10 respondents (84%) said that treatment by the public had a negative impact on their morale.** A large majority of respondents also said that their pay (84%) had a negative impact on their morale.

Factors negatively impacting morale	2021	2020
How the police are treated by the government	95%	-
How the police are treated by the public	84%	-
Pay ³	84%	-
Your pension	73%	69%
Workload and responsibilities	64%	66%
The COVID crisis	61%	65%
Work-life balance	58%	59%
Opportunities for development and promotion	38%	-

“I find the pay derisory. I find the way in which the Govt. treats officers derisory. The constant negative press is toxic for morale.”

Response Sergeant, 12 years’ service, South West

“Having served for 26 years in the Police Service, I have never felt as low in morale nor can I recall ever being as overworked or treated with such contempt, by Force Command, Government, the media and the public alike.”

Detective Sergeant, 26 years’ service, North West

“I love my job. I hate the negative government/press and public opinions of the Police and feel this has a massive negative effect on my morale and my colleagues. Everywhere is breaking, the court system, the CPS and this just gets pushed onto the Police. Police fill the gaps where other services are not able, Mental Health, Children’s services and we cannot walk away.”

Public Protection Constable, 16 years’ service, South West

³ Please note – last year this question asked respondents about the impact of both pay and benefits and so comparison to previous years has not been included.

"I feel like the police are constantly beaten down by Government and the media, and there is no support offered or push back by any members of the executive teams We can't stand up for ourselves in fear of being hauled over the coals! It feels like a very lonely place being a police officer."

Detective Sergeant, 17 years' service, Region Unknown

"Morale is at rock bottom in the police service which is having a detrimental effect on people's mental health. The pressures of work are too much to bear as the workload is too high. Being a detective, there have been unnecessary demands to complete a significant amount of work to submit files to the CPS in terms of full files for Pre-Charge advice. This is a ridiculous request and causing a significant increase in work load."

Detective Constable, 14 years' service, North West

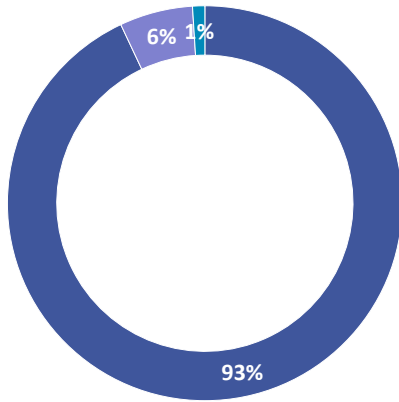
"There is a huge issue in my personal team for understaffing and it seems to be reflective across [my force]. We are understaffed, over-worked and underpaid for the jobs we attend and the amount of stress on us at all times.... The understaffing is causing morale to be the lowest it has been for a large number of years and there are a large amount of officers ending up off work with stress related issues, me included. We do not feel supported or listened to by SLT [Senior Leadership Team] or line supervisors and we are worked to the bone at times.....often being late off work, having to fight tooth and nail for overtime to be paid. The public seem to hate us and have no respect for us most of the time, which makes dealing with jobs much harder."

Response Constable, 4 years' service, North East

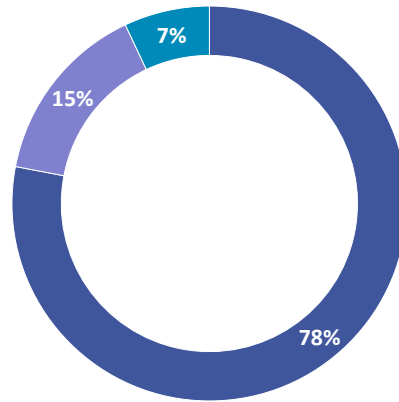
Engagement

Respondents were asked whether they feel respected by the government and by the public. **More than 9 in 10 respondents (93%) said that they do not feel that members of the police are respected by the government.** Almost 8 in 10 respondents (78%) also said that they do not feel members of the police are respected by the public.

I feel that members of the police are respected by the government



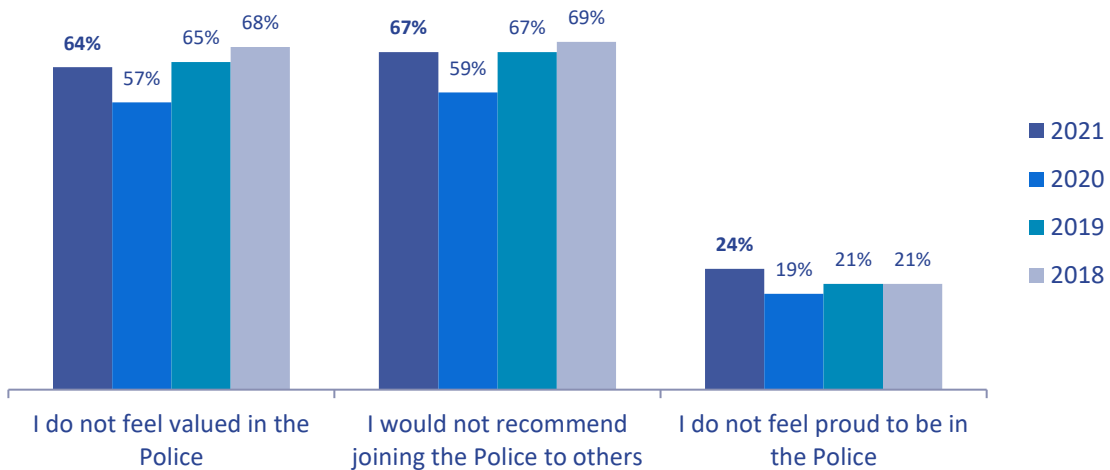
I feel that members of the police are respected by the public



■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree ■ Agree

The proportion of respondents who said that they would not recommend joining the police to others has increased to 67% this year, from 59% last year. There has also been an increase this year in the proportion of respondents who do not feel proud to be in the police service; from 19% last year to 24% this year. Similarly, **the proportion of respondents saying that they are not treated fairly has also increased to 43% this year from 36% last year.**

Respondents' engagement since 2018



"I love my job but only because I have a sense to serve my community and the public.... I find the constant bad press difficult at times and sometimes feel the powers that be don't protect us from this enough."

Detective Sergeant, 18 years' service, Eastern

I love being an officer and trying to make a difference. We are let down by the lack of government support, pay in relation to risk is very poor.... More is need to increased people to join the police - the starting wage is very poor and the top pay scale for experienced officers is also poor.

Response Constable, 8 years' service, North West

"We are not valued by the government, courts, or the police service itself. Even the pay review bodies are ignored by the government pay awards so this serves no purpose. We are in a global pandemic and police were there to keep order, support people, act as mental health workers, support other emergency services and to then be told we get a pay freeze. This is one of the most undervalued positions in the UK."

Neighbourhood Policing Constable, 18 years' service, South East

"The police service has lost its direction, it is no longer a job to be proud of and a job that society values and respects as a whole.... I feel extremely sorry for those that are required to do a degree to do the job.... I recently spoke to a probationer on such scheme.... On top of the extraordinary workload [they were] expected to complete a further 37 hours a month on degree work..... [they were] resigning. I would not recommend any to join the Police service."

Roads Policing Constable, 23 years' service, Midlands

"I love being a Police Officer, I joined up to be a response officer and to help people. The job with all of the politics and challenges means that it is becoming harder and harder to actually be one."

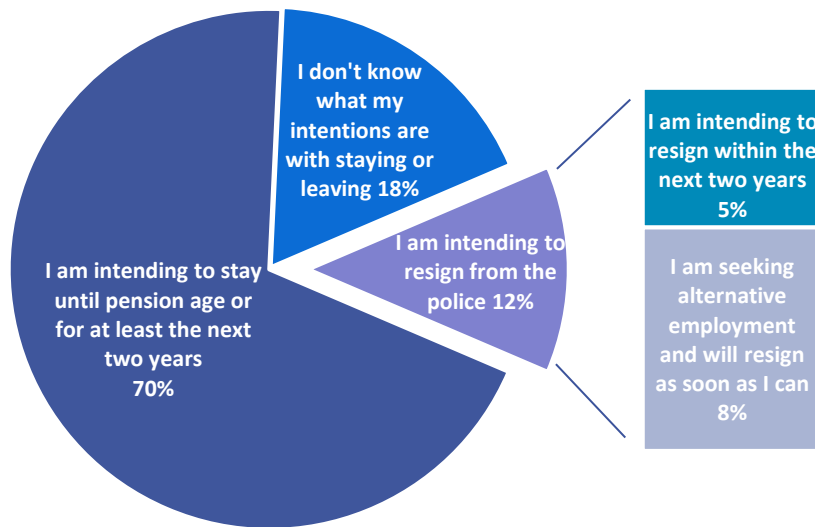
Response Constable, 5 years' service, South East

Intention to leave

There has been an **increase this year in the proportion of respondents intending to resign either within the next two years or as soon as possible**; in 2021 this proportion is 12% compared to 10% last year.

Consequently, there has also been a **decrease in the proportion of respondents who intend to stay in the police for more than two years, from 75% in 2020 to 70% this year.** Respondents from a Black, Asian, Mixed or other Ethnic Minority background (64%) were less likely than White respondents (72%) to say they intend to stay in the police until pension age or at least the next two years.

Staying or leaving the police service



Respondents who intend to resign within the next two years were asked what had influenced their decision to leave. **Respondents' morale and how the police are treated by the government were most likely to contribute to their intention to leave the police service.**

82% of respondents who intend to leave the police said that their morale had a major effect on their intention to leave and 77% said that the treatment of the police by the government had a major effect. Roughly three quarters (73%) of respondents said that the impact of the job on their psychological health and wellbeing, and 69% of respondents said that their pay had a major effect on their intention to leave the police.

Factors affecting respondents' intention to leave	Major effect on intention to leave
Your morale	82%
How the police are treated by the government	77%
The impact of the job on your psychological health and wellbeing	73%

Your pay	69%
The impact of the job on your physical health and wellbeing	64%
Better job opportunities outside of the Police	59%
The impact of your job on your family/personal life	56%
How the police are treated by the public	55%
Your pension	51%
Your workload and responsibilities	48%
I have reached pension age	17%
Personal reasons	10%

“For the first time in my life I now feel like I don't want to be a police officer, and that hurts. However, morale is so low that it is damaging and I have spent three months now looking for a new opportunity outside of policing.”

Detective Sergeant, 8 years' service, London

“[I am considering resigning because of] how the media persecute the police and drive division between the public and police. Biased reporting that goes unchallenged regardless of whether the truth is reported or not. Apart from the Government, [the media] are the biggest danger to the police service.”

Intelligence Constable, 20 years' service, London

“My current role is meant to be response however I am also expected to manage a workload and majority of the time investigate complex cases that CID will not take. I want to remain within the Police to do right by people who are vulnerable and require help from those who can, I have doubted staying within the Police for too long now and constantly look at employment elsewhere. It is difficult to remain positive when your pay does not reflect what you do day in and day out but also the cost of living which is constantly on the rise too.”

Response Constable, 5 years' service, South East

“I am responsible for a team of risk assessors who manage, investigate and convict known registered sex offenders.... I spend every day fighting political decision making, and poorly implemented processes, in order to try and keep the public safe. I go home and don't sleep due to the worry that I have missed something, that one of these offenders will hurt someone, because I missed something and destroying their lives forever. However, I cannot leave the role, because the thought that someone won't put the work in that I do scares me more.”

Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant, 18 years' service, Midlands

“I believe the pay I receive, for the roles that I do is rubbish. The current workload on all officers is horrendous and needs to be addressed. I work in the tutor unit, trying to assist the new probationers, who are continually wanting to leave due to the pressure that is on them from day one. However, I am being pulled from pillar to post by bosses at the station and being tasked with so many different things I cannot do my core role.”

Response Constable, 18 years' service, North West

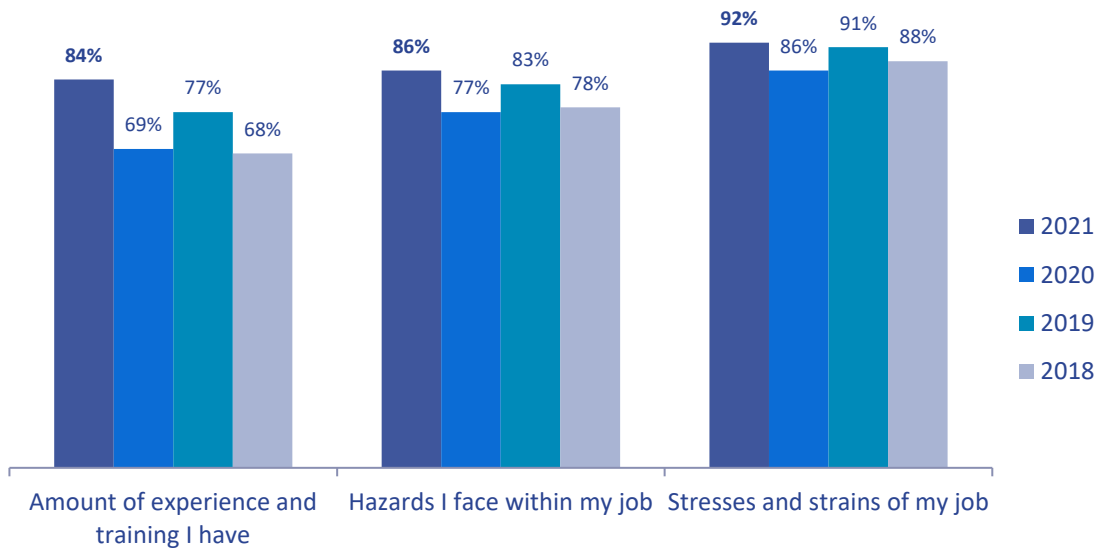
Attitudes Towards Pay and Remuneration

Perceptions of fair pay

This year respondents were more likely than ever before to say that they do not feel fairly paid; **respondents were most likely to say that they are not fairly paid for the stresses and strains of their job (92%)**. Furthermore, **86% of respondents said that they do not feel fairly paid for the hazards within their job**.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, **this year respondents were also asked if they feel they are fairly paid compared to other key workers; 66% said that they do not feel fairly paid compared to other key workers**.

I am *not* fairly paid considering the...



Respondents within the 2021 Pay and Morale Survey were much more likely to say that they are not fairly paid for the amount of experience and training they have compared to previous years. This year 84% of respondents said that they are not fairly paid for the amount of experience and training they have compared to 69% in 2020.

Respondents were also more likely this year to say that they **have not been provided with pay increases to maintain their standard of living; this proportion is 92% in 2021 compared to 81% in 2020.**

“I took a big pay cut to join the job and am still nowhere near on what I was in my previous career.... I feel the amount of hours we work and risks we face are not reflected in the pay whatsoever. I do this job because I love it however have had to seriously consider leaving numerous times due to the poor pay.”

Response Constable, 5 years’ service, Eastern

“[I] don't feel pay reflects level of training/workload/risk and stress involved with my role. [I] had to complete considerable additional training to be qualified to do my role. But actually, receive less money than [a] standard response officer due to the difference in shifts (i.e. reduction in unsociable hours pay). Given the years of pay freeze or minimal pay increase and the increase in cost of living, in real terms we've had suffered a considerable pay cut.”

Public Protection Constable, 16 years’ service, North East

“Prior to being a police officer I served in a staff role. My work life balance was considerably better within this role, with no night shifts; no cancelled rest days; rarely kept on beyond my tour of duty; and the role had far less risk than my current one. Despite this, my take home pay per month was several hundred pounds higher.”

Response Constable, 2 years’ service, South East

“I think for the danger we are put in day in and day out the basic pay is quite low and doesn't go up considerably higher till about the 4th-5th year. Also that has now been changed to only gaining a higher wage if your PDR reflects on the work you are doing and you have met the criteria to gain a pay increase. A bit disheartening when pre joining you are told what your wages are going to be each year and now it depends on your PDR.”

Response Constable, less than 1 years’ service, Wales

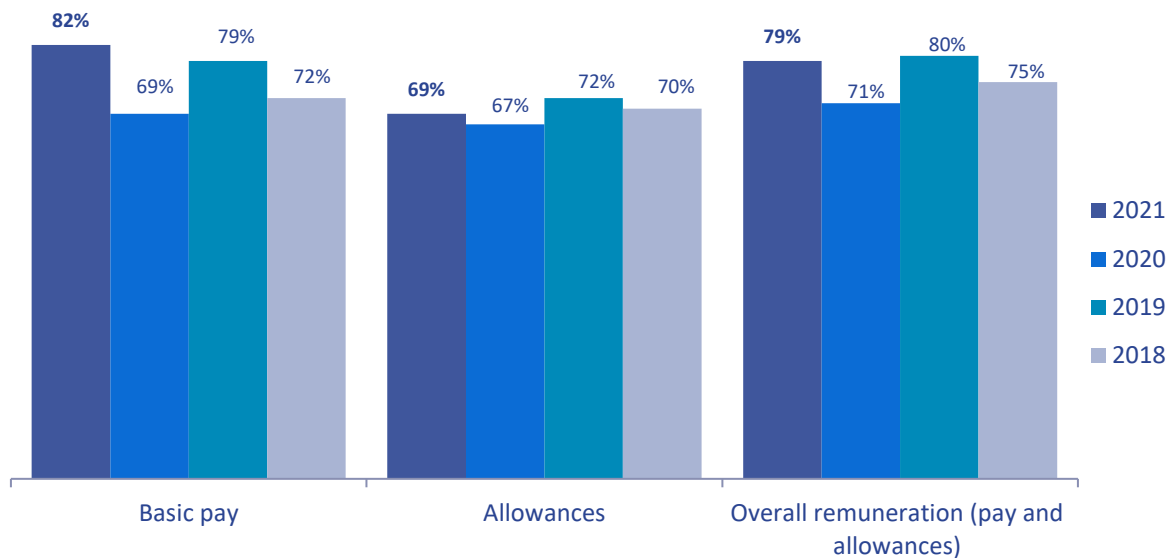
“We simply cannot do right for doing wrong at the moment. The constant drain of negativity has genuinely made me think - what’s the point anymore? Pay and conditions are another huge negative, I have worked hard during covid on a response shift, without the facility to work from home and fully mitigate risk. I have put myself and my family at risk of infection (and have indeed been infected) and the governments pay freeze was nothing short of an insulting kick in the teeth. My living standards have declined.”

Response Inspector, 24 years’ service, North East

Satisfaction with pay and benefits

This year, dissatisfaction with basic pay was the highest it has ever been within the PFEW Pay and Morale Survey, with 82% of respondents saying they are dissatisfied with their pay. This was also a notable increase from the 69% of respondents in 2020 who were dissatisfied with their basic pay. **The proportion of respondents dissatisfied with their overall remuneration (including pay and allowances) and pension has also increased this year.** In 2021 79% of respondents were satisfied with their overall remuneration compared to 71% in 2020; 71% of respondents this year were dissatisfied with their pension compared to 63% in 2020.

I am dissatisfied with my...



“I think our pay would be reasonable if it were not for the workload increases over the last 5 years or so, and particularly over the last 2 years of covid. We are short staffed all the time, and this has a knock-on impact with people going off sick and then further pressure on those who remain.”

Public Protection Constable, 11 years’ service, North East

“The world has moved on with inflation every year, and yet the police pay has seen a sub-par increase. Police have essentially experienced a 30% pay cut over the past years. This should not be accepted by the government.”

Neighbourhood Policing Constable, 11 years’ service, Wales

“The only thing lower than morale around the station is our pay. The remuneration we get for the job we do it outrageous but we do the job to help people. It would be nice for a salary to reflect the work and the risk.”

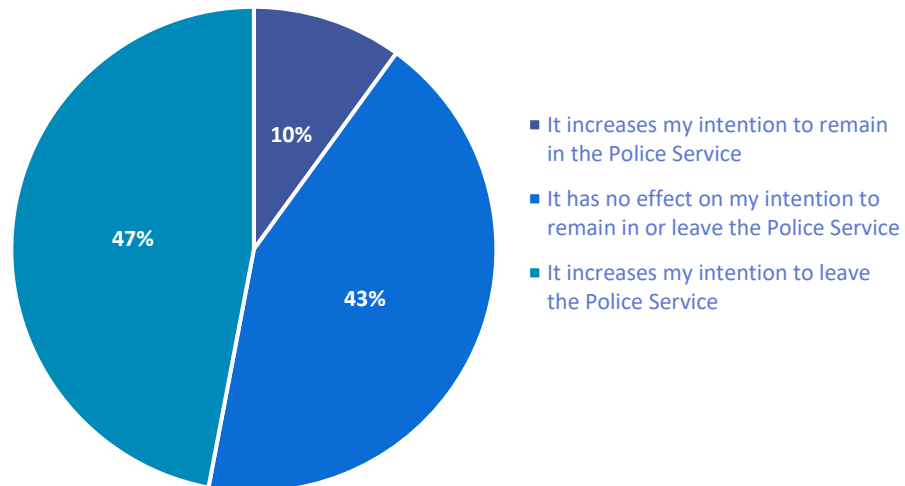
Response Constable, 2 years’ service, Eastern

“The argument that a pay freeze was required to bring public sector in line with private in terms of pay was disingenuous. The entirety of public sector are considered when averaging out pay increase rather than sector based. We have been penalised continually by this government over the past decade in terms of working conditions, pay and pension.”

Training Department Constable, 17 years’ service, London

Finally, almost half of respondents (47%) said that their pay increased their intention to leave the police.

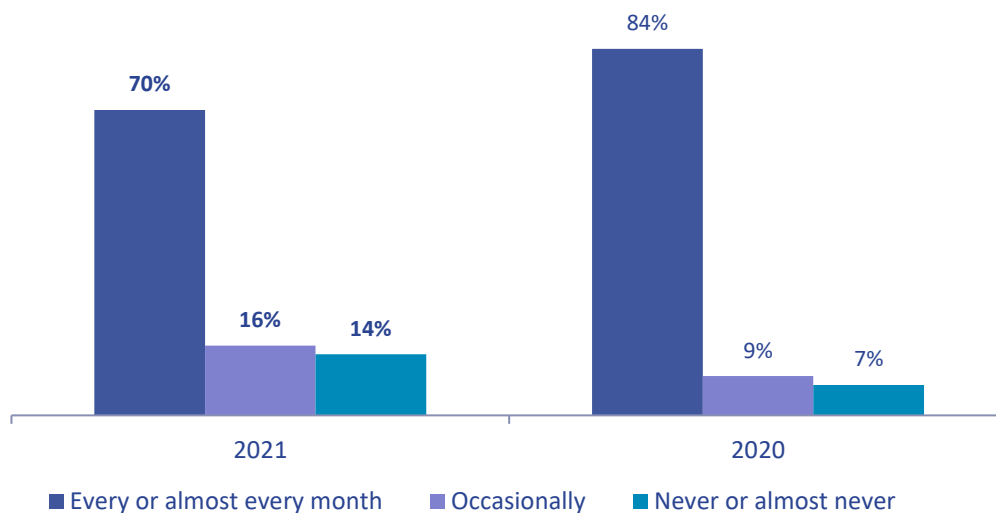
What impact does your pay have on your intention to remain in or leave the Police Service?



Cost of Living

The proportion of respondents saying that they are **never or almost never able to cover their monthly essentials** has doubled in the past year, from 7% in 2020 to 14% in 2021. This

I am able to cover my monthly essentials...

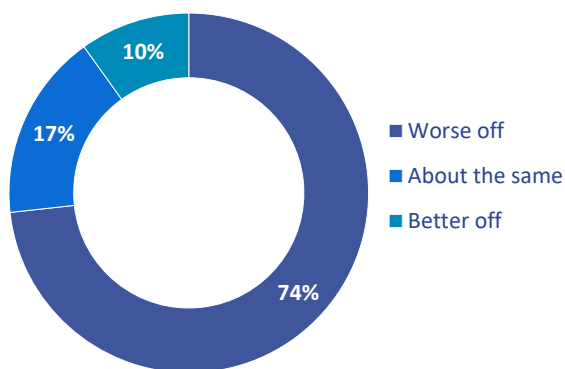


proportion increases further to 17% when we look only at respondents in their probation period (i.e., the first two or three years of service). Whilst this proportion on the surface may be considered relatively low, it nonetheless represents one in seven police officers, and such a considerable increase in a short period of time is concerning.

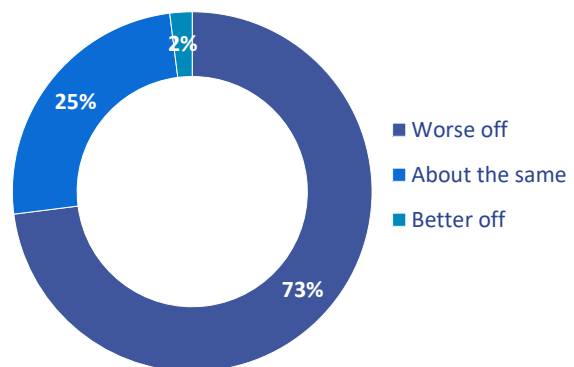
Just under half (45%) of respondents said that they worry about money every day or almost every day, an increase from 37% in 2020. For respondents in their probationary period, this proportion reached a majority (51%).

Almost three quarters of respondents (74%) said that they feel worse off financially compared to five years ago and 73% of respondents said that they feel worse off financially compared to 12 months ago. Overall, 89% of respondents who said they feel worse off now compared to 12 months ago also said that they feel worse off compared to five years ago.

Compared to five years ago, I feel...



Compared to 12 months ago, I feel...



Sadly, I feel that the government has let the police service down and uses us as they see fit. I love my job.... Sadly, the government do not value police officers and pay lip service to our basic needs. I have had to take a second job just to help cover the bills/household costs due to the rising costs of everything and lack of pay increases and as a result I have very little family time. I am tired all the time due to working two jobs and can't see an end to it until I retire. The government need to support the service and the officers that work in it and give them a fair days pay for the more than fair days work that we all perform.

Sergeant (Role Unknown), 25 years' service, North West

“I am far worse off now than several years ago, I am always thinking about budgets and bills, I never used to, pay rises, when we get them are not enough and we are a constant and easy target for the government. When I consider I used to be able to save, now I can't unless I have overtime to help.”

Detective Constable, 27 years' service, South West

“For the first few years of my service, constables received a 3% pay raise annually which meant that we could maintain a good standard of living and which compensated for the shift work and risk. For the past several years, we have been on either pay freezes or much lower pay rises, combined with increased payments into the pension scheme with no increased benefits. This had greatly affected standard of living and morale.... It has become clear over the past ten years or so that neither [my force] nor the Government have any respect or consideration for rank and file police officers. One really is 'just a number'.”

Detective Constable, 28 years' service, North West

“I am worse off financially than I was 10 years ago - and just because I look after my money and do not need pay day loans or borrow from family members doesn't mean to say I don't find day to day living tough... Our pay increases have either been minimal at best and never met inflation or frozen which is an outrage considering we have all had to work harder and longer because the Gov cut our numbers and are ability to be effective. The amount of stress and risk that officers carry is outrageous and not reflective at all in our salaries.”

Detective Sergeant, 24 years' service, South West

“I appreciate getting the balance correct is difficult, however I find being in the police rewarding and I love working on LPT, but there are certainly changes that need to be made to improve morale. The basic pay for new officers does not keep up with the increasing price of necessities such as petrol, food, rent, etc..... Given the exhausting job we do on LPT, I do not have the energy or time to get a second job.”

Response Constable, 2 years' service, South East

Appendix A

Further information on this survey can be found in the Pay and Morale 2021 Technical Annex, specifically:

- Background to the 2021 Pay and Morale survey
- Key areas the 2021 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 2021 Technical Annex can be found here: <https://www.polfed.org/our-work/pay-and-morale/>.