

PFEW Detectives' Survey: Changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging

National Report
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FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

Due to the recent changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging (applied in January 2021), the PFEW conducted a short survey on behalf of the Police Federation's National Detectives Forum to assess the impact of these changes on Detectives.

This report provides a summary of the results and where appropriate, details of results for Detectives from previous years.¹ However, differences across these figures have not been tested to assess whether they are statistically significant;² therefore, any and all differences are included for guidance only and must be treated with caution. Please be aware that the total number of responses for each item may vary slightly as not all items were answered by all respondents. As such, results are provided as valid percentages³ and were rounded to the nearest whole number.⁴ In addition, the actual differences between any and all groups may be quite small, and these details should be considered when interpreting the data.

RESPONSE RATES AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Survey responses were gathered over two time periods: A four-week period between October and November in 2021, and a five week-period between January and February 2022. All Detectives in England and Wales were eligible to participate.⁵

In total 6,298 responses were received from the 43 forces of England and Wales, however, as there is still no publicly available accepted measure of the total number of detectives in England and Wales it is not possible to calculate a definitive response rate for the survey as a proportion of the total number of Detectives. Despite this, we can be confident that the sample size was large enough that the percentages quoted in this report can be considered to be accurate within the normal bounds of academic rigour.⁶

¹ Data are taken from the 2020 Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey (DCWS). For more information on the 2020 DCWS please visit: <https://www.polfed.org/support/demand-capacity-welfare/>. Please note: National results for 2020 DCWS were weighted to ensure that each force were proportionally represented within the national sample. More information about weightings can be found in the 2020 Technical Annex R098/2020.

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

³ Parts per 100 of those that provided an answer to the question.

⁴ Please note, summed percentages for items may not always add to 100% due to rounding.

⁵ Please note, the majority of data representing Cheshire was collected by the local Federation branch in 2021 via a separate survey and subsequently shared with PFEW HQ.

⁶ Margin of error for all officers of federated rank (n = 133,788 based on 2021 Home Office figures) with a sample size of 6,298 would be $\pm 2\%$ with a 99% confidence level; the margin of error for detectives will therefore as a minimum be below $\pm 2\%$.

In addition, the total number of responses was similar to previous PFEW Detectives' Surveys conducted between 2013 and 2015.⁷

Forces with 50 or more responses were also provided with local reports detailing the results for their force areas alone.

The 15 force areas that reached this threshold during the four-week period between October and November in 2021 were provided force reports in December 2021.⁸ Within these 15 reports, where comparisons are made between the force's results and those from the 'Full sample,' this refers to the interim national findings which are based on the responses gathered across 26 forces⁹ during this time period via PFEW HQ surveys only (n=3,042: Research Report R126/2021).

Cheshire Federation conducted their own version of the survey and subsequently shared the data with PFEW HQ in 2022 for inclusion in the national dataset. Whilst they also received a force report in December 2021, their data did not contribute to the interim national findings.

The 23 force areas that reached the threshold value of 50 responses during the five-week period between January and February 2022 were provided with force reports in March 2022.¹⁰ Within these 23 reports, where comparisons are made between the force's results and those from the 'Final national sample,' this refers to the full national findings which represent all 6,298 responses gathered between October 2021 and February 2022 across the 43 police forces in England and Wales. For a copy of the interim national findings, please see Annex A on page 11.

⁷ For more information on previous Detectives' Surveys please see <https://www.polfed.org/our-work/operational-policing/detectives-forum/>

⁸ Cambridgeshire, Devon & Cornwall, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Metropolitan Police Service, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, South Yorkshire, Suffolk, Surrey, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire.

⁹ Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, City of London, Devon & Cornwall, Durham, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police Service, Norfolk, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire.

¹⁰ Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Humberside, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Sussex, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, West Midlands, and Wiltshire.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In total, **6,298** responses were received.
- **83%** of respondents told us that their **workload is currently 'Too high,' or 'Much too high.'** Moreover, **93%** indicated that their **overall workload has increased** due to the recent changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging.
- **61%** of respondents reported a **low job satisfaction** rating of *4* or *less*. In addition, **77%** said that their **overall job satisfaction had decreased** due to the recent changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging.
- **59%** of respondents characterised their job as *'Very'* or *'Extremely'* stressful. Moreover, **87%** said the recent changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had **increased how stressful they find their job.**
- **55%** of respondents rated their morale as *'Low'* or *'Very low.'* In addition, **86%** said their **morale had decreased** due to the recent changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging.
- **96%** of respondents indicated that the changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had **increased the number of hours spent on pre-charging file preparation,** and a similar proportion (**95%**) said that the changes had **increased the number of hours needed to submit a pre-charge file to the CPS.**
- However, **67%** of respondents indicated that the changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had **decreased the number of hours they were able to spend actively investigating live cases** (due to increased case preparation work), and **86%** said that the changes had **decreased** the efficiency of the criminal justice system.
- In addition, **80%** of respondents indicated that the changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had **increased the number of active cases they are working on** and **45%** indicated that the number of **victims that have withdrawn from active participation with their investigation has increased** due to these changes.
- Finally, **61%** of respondents indicated that the recent changes to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had **increased their intention to leave their role as a Detective.**

RESULTS

TRAINING

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of Detectives' training they had completed at the time of the survey, and prior to January 2021 (when the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had changed).¹¹ Results can be seen in the tables below:

Table 1: Prior to January 2021 I was a.....	% of respondents
PIP 1 Investigator	15%
Trainee Detective (training to become a PIP 2 Investigator)	15%
PIP 2 Investigator	60%
Other (please specify)	10%

Table 2: I am currently a...	% of respondents
PIP 1 Investigator	11%
Trainee Detective (training to become a PIP 2 Investigator)	15%
PIP 2 Investigator	64%
Other (please specify)	11%

¹¹ Please note, the Cheshire Federation survey did not include questions on the respondents' training and are therefore not represented in these analyses.

OVERALL WORKLOADS AND JOB SATISFACTION

Overall, 83% of respondents told us that their workload is currently *'Too high,'* or *'Much too high.'*¹² Results can be seen in Table 3, and a historical comparison can be found in Table 4.

Table 3: Proportion of respondents reporting that their workload has been <i>'Too high'</i> or <i>'Much too high'</i> since January 2021	% of respondents
Current survey	83%

Table 4: Proportion of respondents reporting that their workload was <i>'Too high'</i> or <i>'Much too high'</i> over the previous year	% of respondents
2020 Demand Capacity and Welfare Survey (responses from Detectives only)	64%

Respondents were asked to rate their overall job satisfaction between 0 and 10, where 0 was *'Not at all satisfied'* and 10 was *'Completely satisfied.'* Overall, 61% of respondents reported a low job satisfaction rating of 4 or less.¹³

Results can be seen in Table 5, alongside a historical comparison.

Table 5: Proportion of respondents reporting a low job satisfaction rating of 4 or less	% of respondents
Current survey	61%
2020 Demand Capacity and Welfare Survey (responses from Detectives only)	34%

¹² Please note, the data obtained from Cheshire Federation were elicited using a slightly different response scale to that of the other survey collections. More specifically, respondents to the Cheshire Federation survey were provided the following five-point response scale: *'Very low'*, *'Low'*, *'Average'*, *'High'*, and *'Very high'*, whilst the other survey collections asked respondents to indicate their current workloads based on the following response scale: *'Much too low'*, *'Too low'*, *'About right'*, *'Too high'*, and *'Much too high'*. Whilst not directly comparable, for the purposes of this analysis response of *'High'* and *'Very high'* from the Cheshire Federation survey have been treated as being analogous to *'Too high'* and *'Much too high'* from the other data collections. However, for transparency, when excluding responses from the Cheshire Federation survey the proportion of respondents reporting that their workload is currently *'Too high,'* or *'Much too high'* is still 83%.

¹³ Please note, the Cheshire Federation survey did not include questions on job satisfaction and are therefore not represented in these analyses.

STRESS AND MORALE

Work related stress was measured using a single-item measure. Overall, 59% of respondents said that they viewed their job as 'Very' or 'Extremely' stressful.¹⁴

Results can be seen in Table 6, alongside a historical comparison.

Table 6: Proportion of respondents indicating that they find their job 'Very' or 'Extremely' stressful	% of respondents
Current survey	59%
2020 Demand Capacity and Welfare Survey (responses from Detectives only)	37%

Respondents were also asked to rate their morale on a five-point scale from 'Very low' to 'Very high.' Overall, 55% of the full sample rated their morale as 'Low' or 'Very low.'¹⁵ Results can be seen in Table 7, alongside a historical comparison.

Table 7: Proportion of respondents indicating that their morale is 'Low' or 'Very low'	% of respondents
Current survey	55%
2020 Demand Capacity and Welfare Survey (responses from Detectives only)	34%

¹⁴ Please note, the Cheshire Federation survey did not include questions on job-related stress and are therefore not represented in these analyses.

¹⁵ Please note, the data obtained from Cheshire Federation were elicited using a slightly different response scale to that of the other survey collections. More specifically, respondents to the Cheshire Federation survey were provided the following five-point response scale: 'Very low', 'Low', 'Average', 'High', and 'Very high', whilst the other survey collections asked respondents to indicate their current workloads based on the following response scale: 'Very low', 'Low', 'Neither high nor low', 'High', and 'Very high'. Whilst these scales are not directly comparable due to differing mid-points, for the purposes of this analysis they have been treated as analogous. However, for transparency, when excluding responses from the Cheshire Federation survey the proportion of respondents reporting that their morale is 'Low' or 'Very low' is still 55%.

IMPACT OF CPS GUIDANCE: OFFICER IMPACTS

Respondents were asked to indicate how the recent changes to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging had affected their workload, their morale, how stressful they find their job, and their overall job satisfaction as a Detective investigating serious and complex crime.

Results are below in Table 8.

Table 8: How, if at all, have the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging affected the following?	% of respondents		
	Decreased	No effect	Increased
Your overall workload	1%	6%	93%
Your morale	86%	11%	3%
How stressful you find your job	6%	7%	87%
Your overall job satisfaction as a detective investigating serious and complex crime	77%	19%	4%

To identify whether the same pattern of results were evident specifically for complex and serious crime, the analyses was re-run only using responses from Detectives that had indicated being PIP 2 trained (and had been PIP 2 trained prior to January 2021; n=3,404). The results are below in Table 9.¹⁶

Table 9: How, if at all, have the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging affected the following?	% of respondents that indicated being PIP 2 prior to January 2021		
	Decreased	No effect	Increased
Your overall workload	1%	6%	94%
Your morale	88%	10%	2%
How stressful you find your job	6%	7%	87%
Your overall job satisfaction as a detective investigating serious and complex crime	82%	15%	4%

¹⁶ Please note, the Cheshire Federation survey did not include questions on the respondents’ training and are therefore not included in these analyses.

IMPACT OF CPS GUIDANCE: OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

Respondents were asked to indicate how the recent changes to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging had affected a range of job-related outcomes for serious and complex crime.

Results are below in Table 10.

Table 10: How, if at all, have the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging affected the following in relation to serious and complex crime (PIP2)?	% of respondents		
	Decreased	No effect	Increased
The number of hours spent on pre-charge file preparation	1%	3%	96%
Number of active cases you are working on	1%	19%	80%
The number of hours you are able to spend actively investigating live cases (due to increased case preparation work)	67%	7%	26%
The number of hours needed to submit a pre-charge file to the CPS	1%	3%	95%
The number of victims that have withdrawn from active participation with the investigation	4%	51%	45%
The number of threshold cases for remand that you have been able to achieve	38%	54%	8%
The efficiency of the criminal justice system	86%	10%	4%

To identify whether the same pattern of results were evident specifically for complex and serious crime, the analyses was re-run only using responses from Detectives that had indicated being PIP 2 trained (and had been PIP 2 trained prior to January 2021; n=3,404).¹⁷ The results are in Table 11 on the next page.

¹⁷ Please note, the Cheshire Federation survey did not include questions on the respondents training and are therefore not included in these analyses.

Table 11: How, if at all, have the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging affected the following in relation to serious and complex crime (PIP2)?

% of respondents that indicated being PIP 2 prior to January 2021

	Decreased	No effect	Increased
The number of hours spent on pre-charge file preparation	1%	3%	97%
Number of active cases you are working on	1%	20%	79%
The number of hours you are able to spend actively investigating live cases (due to increased case preparation work)	68%	7%	25%
The number of hours needed to submit a pre-charge file to the CPS	1%	3%	96%
The number of victims that have withdrawn from active participation with the investigation	4%	52%	44%
The number of threshold cases for remand that you have been able to achieve	39%	55%	6%
The efficiency of the criminal justice system	88%	8%	4%

INTENTION TO LEAVE

Respondents were asked about their intentions to remain in or leave their current position, and to indicate how the recent changes to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging had affected how they felt about their job.

Overall, only **34%** of respondents indicated that they would like to remain a Detective in their current role and force (please see Table 12), and **61%** respondents indicated that the recent changes to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging had increased their intention to leave their role as a detective (please see Table 13).

Table 12: How do you feel about your job?	% of respondents
I would like to remain a Detective in my current role and force	34%
I would like to remain a Detective in my current force but change my role	29%
I would like to remain a Detective but move to another force	3%
I would like to return to uniform	10%
I would like to leave the police service all together	24%

Table 13: What impact, if any, has the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging had on how you feel about your job?	% of respondents
Increases my intention to leave my role as a Detective	61%
Has no effect on my intention to stay or leave my role as a Detective	39%
Decreases my intention to leave my role as a Detective	1%

Annex A – Interim Findings

Force areas with 50 or more responses to the PFEW Detectives’ Survey on the Changes to the CPS Director’s Guidance on Charging were provided with local reports detailing the results for their force areas alone. In total, 39 of the 43 force areas reached this threshold and were provide with a local force report.

The 15 force areas that reached this threshold during the four-week data collection period between October and November in 2021 were provided force reports in December 2021.¹⁸ Within these 15 reports, where comparisons are made between the force’s results and those from the ‘Full sample,’ this refers to the interim national findings which are based on the responses gathered across 26 forces¹⁹ during this time period via PFEW HQ surveys only (n=3,042: Research Report R126/2021).

Cheshire Federation conducted their own version of the survey and subsequently shared the data with PFEW HQ in 2022 for inclusion in the national dataset. Whilst they also received a force report in December 2021, their data did not contribute to the interim national findings.

The 23 force areas that reached the threshold value of 50 responses during the five-week data collection period between January and February 2022 were provided with force reports in March 2022.²⁰ Within these 23 reports, where comparisons are made between the force’s results and those from the ‘Final national sample,’ this refers to the full national findings which represent all 6,298 responses gathered between October 2021 and February 2022 across the 43 police forces in England and Wales.

Please see pages 12 through 14 for tables outlining the interim national findings and the final national findings for comparison; showing that in the vast majority of cases the interim findings sit within the margin of error for the final sample.

¹⁸ Cambridgeshire, Devon & Cornwall, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Metropolitan Police Service, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, South Yorkshire, Suffolk, Surrey, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire.

¹⁹ Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, City of London, Devon & Cornwall, Durham, Essex, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Humberside, Kent, Leicestershire, Merseyside, Metropolitan Police Service, Norfolk, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, South Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire.

²⁰ Avon and Somerset, Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Essex, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Humberside, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Merseyside, North Wales, North Yorkshire, Northamptonshire, South Wales, Staffordshire, Sussex, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, West Midlands, and Wiltshire.

Table A1: Prior to January 2021 I was a.....	% of respondents	
	Interim findings (2021)	Final national findings (2022)
PIP 1 Investigator	14%	15%
Trainee Detective (training to become a PIP 2 Investigator)	15%	15%
PIP 2 Investigator	63%	60%
Other (please specify)	8%	10%

Table A2: I am currently a...	% of respondents	
	Interim findings (2021)	Final national findings (2022)
PIP 1 Investigator	10%	11%
Trainee Detective (training to become a PIP 2 Investigator)	15%	15%
PIP 2 Investigator	66%	64%
Other (please specify)	9%	11%

Table A3: Proportion of respondents reporting:	% of respondents	
	Interim findings (2021)	Final national findings (2022)
That their workload has been ' <i>Too high</i> ' or ' <i>Much too high</i> ' since January 2021	82%	83%
A low job satisfaction rating of 4 or less	60%	61%
That they find their job ' <i>Very</i> ' or ' <i>Extremely</i> ' stressful	58%	59%
That their morale is ' <i>Low</i> ' or ' <i>Very low</i> '	54%	55%

Table A4: How, if at all, have the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging affected the following?	Interim findings (2021) % of respondents			Final national findings (2022) % of respondents		
	Decreased	No effect	Increased	Decreased	No effect	Increased
	Your overall workload	1%	7%	93%	1%	6%
Your morale	85%	12%	3%	86%	11%	3%
How stressful you find your job	6%	8%	86%	6%	7%	87%
Your overall job satisfaction as a detective investigating serious and complex crime	76%	20%	4%	77%	19%	4%

Table A5: How, if at all, have the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging affected the following in relation to serious and complex crime (PIP2)?	Interim findings (2021) % of respondents			Final national findings (2022) % of respondents		
	Decreased	No effect	Increased	Decreased	No effect	Increased
	The number of hours spent on pre-charge file preparation	1%	4%	95%	1%	3%
Number of active cases you are working on	1%	22%	76%	1%	19%	80%
The number of hours you are able to spend actively investigating live cases (due to increased case preparation work)	65%	8%	27%	67%	7%	26%
The number of hours needed to submit a pre-charge file to the CPS	1%	4%	94%	1%	3%	95%
The number of victims that have withdrawn from active participation with the investigation	4%	53%	42%	4%	51%	45%
The number of threshold cases for remand that you have been able to achieve	38%	55%	7%	38%	54%	8%
The efficiency of the criminal justice system	86%	10%	4%	86%	10%	4%

Table A6: How do you feel about your job?	% of respondents	
	Interim findings (2021)	Final national findings (2022)
I would like to remain a Detective in my current role and force	34%	34%
I would like to remain a Detective in my current force but change my role	32%	29%
I would like to remain a Detective but move to another force	4%	3%
I would like to return to uniform	9%	10%
I would like to leave the police service all together	21%	24%

Table A7: What impact, if any, has the recent changes (implemented in January 2021) to the CPS Director's Guidance on Charging had on how you feel about your job?	% of respondents	
	Interim findings (2021)	Final national findings (2022)
Increases my intention to leave my role as a Detective	59%	61%
Has no effect on my intention to stay or leave my role as a Detective	40%	39%
Decreases my intention to leave my role as a Detective	1%	1%