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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **POLICE FEDERATION PAY & MORALE SURVEY 2022**

Statement from Sgt Sam Dobbs – Chair, Northamptonshire Police Federation  
*Representing Northamptonshire's 1400+ Constables, Sergeants, Inspectors and Chief Inspectors*

The results of the 2022 Pay & Morale Survey have published today. I described last year's results as dismal, this year's results are worse and make for shameful reading.

The Police Federation of England & Wales (PFEW) is a staff association, not a Union, and as such, officers do not have the right to strike, they rely on the Chairs of the organisation to highlight the realities of policing to the public and to decision-makers in Government. This year, the responses from Northamptonshire officers, mirror the national findings in virtually all categories. The comments from all involved in police leadership also echo the dismay.

Here's what the survey tells us, from the perspective of 36,669 responses nationally and 413 responses in this county, representing 26% and 29% of total officers respectively. Locally respondents were 78% in the rank of constable and 17% sergeants.

### **PAY & REMUNERATION**

85% of local officers are dissatisfied with their pay and allowances (87% nationally) with 98% reporting increases in the cost of living which has affected everyone. 87% of us reported being worse off than five years ago. A concerning 17% of local respondents report 'never' or 'almost never' having enough money to cover essentials. This has a massive implication for police officers who are not allowed to have unlawful debt and whose working rules are stringent to protect them from being compromised.

This is why we are seeing more officers reaching out for help and financial advice, and why a recent report to the Chief Constable has demonstrated concerns about officers running down their savings, seeking alternative incomes to boost their salary, and becoming reliant on overtime, working when they should be resting. Some (6% nationally) have opted out of their pension scheme.

## **MORALE**

52% (56% nationally) said their morale is 'low' or 'very low'. 76% (87% nationally). 95% blame the Government for their low morale and 87% blame the Government for the pay issues. These figures are ignored at peril when compared with other data available. The Office for National Statistics measures public feelings on life in general. In three out of four categories, police officers feel worse than the general public in basic areas as follows, all marked out of ten:

- *Overall, how satisfied are you with your life?*  
The general public measured 7.5, with our police officers measuring 5
- *To what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?*  
The general public responded 7.8 with our police officers measuring 6.1
- *How happy did you feel yesterday?*  
The general public measured 7.4 whilst Police officers measured 5.4
- *How anxious did you feel yesterday?*  
The general public measured 3.2 whilst Police officers measured 4.3

## **ENGAGEMENT**

These shocking figures need no further explanation, they lay bare the crisis policing faces: (figures in brackets are national responses)

- 96% (94%) of officers do not feel respected by the Government
- 62% (67%) do not feel valued by the public
- 68% (70%) would not recommend others to join the police service
- 23% are not proud to be a part of the police service

## **INTENTION TO LEAVE**

At a time of national recruitment in order to satisfy Government targets on replacing officers lost in previous cuts, and those retiring, the response to questions around leaving is jarring. When asked the question 'do you intend to resign within the next two years or as soon as you can?' 21% of local officers (18% nationally) stated that they had this intention. 100% blamed the Government for this decision, with 98% further blaming morale and 97% pay. Whatever else is ignored or dismissed, this is an area which simply cannot be ignored given the impact on resources, experience and culture of the police service. The 21% intending to leave in 2022 was 11% in 2021.

## **WORKLOAD & WORKING TIME**

66% of national and 69% of Northamptonshire respondents said that their workloads were 'too high' or 'much too high' with 33% saying they were pressured into working longer hours. 93% said that during a four-week period they worked paid (8hrs) or unpaid (5hrs) overtime. The main reasons for this were quoted as 'not enough officers'.

## **OFFICER SAFETY**

Local officers were complimentary about the levels of protective equipment available to them but were asked about their experiences of abuse or attack in the past 12 months. (National responses shown in brackets)

- 41% (37%) experienced verbal abuse once a week
- 10% (11%) experienced unarmed physical attacks once a week
- 12% (13%) had suffered work-related injuries requiring medical attention
- 15% (18%) had suffered one or more injuries requiring medical attention as a result of violence

No assault should ever be seen as just part of the job.

## **HEALTH & WELLBEING**

72% of respondents considered their physical health to be good or very good  
48% found policing very stressful or extremely stressful  
81% reported episodes of stress, low mood, anxiety or other wellbeing issues  
73% reported being aware of reactive services to assist their mental health  
35% reported being aware of proactive services to support their mental health  
69% reported having taken one or more days sick with 29% quoting stress, depression or anxiety as the reason.

None of the figures above show a positive state of mental health within the police service and from our officers on the front line.

## **CONCLUSION**

As the undisputed voice of policing, these findings cannot be considered anything other than a crisis. Our local communities are anxious, worried about pay and income, rising bills and inability to fund the basics. They are being surveyed on whether we can afford more or on our Council Tax to pay for policing. I can't criticise our Commissioner who has raised local taxation to the boundaries of local acceptability to support policing, our Chief Constable who works hard with us to provide the best for our members within his powers, or our public who pay more for policing proportionately than in other counties. The Government are not doing enough.

I cannot defend or ignore some of the horror stories in policing at the moment, that have come out of cuts to vetting units, they are shameful and do not represent the values, intentions, hard work of the vast majority of members who fight crime and protect the public. We police officers are also 'the public' who give our utmost to stop crime daily.

Every day I am asked what more the police can do to show their dissatisfaction other than respond in surveys which do not seem to be listened to by those able to influence. Because the rules were written for an era of completely different values and understanding of the tripartite relationship between Local Policing, Government and Chief Officers, we are now in a world which bears no resemblance to that era for which the rules were designed. Whilst we work to make our voice heard and to get the Government to take action, we must inform the public and our stakeholders so this can be added to the context of policing in today's society, described by our National Chair as 'resting on a knife edge.'

That is why I am adding to the conversation now.

Part of the raison d'être of PFEW is to maintain trust and confidence in policing and there is always the risk that such candour erodes that confidence. The irony is that hour in, hour out, day in, day out, police officers put themselves at risk without fear or favour, to come to work and do their best for the public, with 77% of them remaining proud to do so. The costs of doing that without recognition are clear in these survey results which are to be ignored by the Government at society's peril.

**SAM DOBBS**  
**Chair**  
**Northamptonshire Police Federation**

11 January 2023