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YOUR VOICE MATTERS 2025

OPEN-ENDED ANALYSIS

Police Scotland | Headline Insights



OUR ORGANISATION



OUR CULTURE



YOUR ROLE



OUR LEADERS



YOUR TEAM



YOUR WELLBEING



POLICE
SCOTLAND
POILEAS ALBA



YOUR VOICE MATTERS
WORKFORCE SURVEY

Open-ended analysis conducted



- There were several questions in the Your Voice Matters Survey 2025 that allowed colleagues to answer in their own words.
- This report analyses the open-ended comments provided by colleagues across Police Scotland.
- Thematic analysis has been carried out by Progressive Partnership. The comments for each question are coded into key themes. This report highlights the most frequently coded qualitative themes for each question. The number of people who gave a response to each question is shown.
- The aim of this report is to provide deeper insights into the Your Voice Matters Survey results to aid decision-making and enhance improvement activities.
- The questions included in this report are:
 - Q51. What areas do you think we as an organisation can improve upon?
 - Q52. Thinking about the last 12 months, what are the positives about working in the organisation that the organisation must continue to do?
 - Q53a. Please could you describe your reasons for recommending the organisation as an employer?
 - Q54. Please could you describe your reasons for not recommending the organisation as an employer?
 - Q42. Verbal/Assault by Public: Why were you satisfied/dissatisfied with the support received?
 - Q43. Verbal/Assault by Public: Please could you describe the reasons for not reporting the incident?
 - Q49. Workplace incidents: Why were you satisfied/dissatisfied with the support received?
 - Q50. Workplace incidents: Please could you describe the reasons for not reporting the incident?

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Suggested improvements – Top 3 themes



Q51. What areas do you think we as an organisation can improve upon? And if you would like to share ideas and suggestions for improvement please do so here.

- The three themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Staffing levels / Recruitment / Resourcing – 2,512 mentions, 38%
 2. Strategic leadership / Management Engagement / Visibility – 1,840 mentions, 27%
 3. Wellbeing / Support / Protection / Pay – 1,804 mentions, 27%
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from colleagues.

Suggested Improvements

Staffing levels / Recruitment / Resource



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Key Insights:

- Significant concerns cited regarding the adequacy of staffing levels and resources available. This was particularly the case for front-line colleagues.
- Concerns that current staffing levels are dangerously low, leading to feelings of insecurity when responding to calls, especially in high-pressure situations.
- A substantial portion of responses indicate feelings of being overworked and the need for better recruitment strategies.
- Concerns that dangerously low staffing levels exacerbates stress and increases the risk of burnout.

What Colleagues Said:

“Officers with long service are leaving in droves and nothing is happening. Staffing levels are unsafe, and nothing gets done.”

“Resourcing is becoming a real issue in our department and is becoming as thin as it could get, this has begun to have a visible effect on morale.”

“Improve standards of recruitment/vetting – many officers are completing college and are unable to carry out basic core duties putting more pressure on reduced teams.”

“More people will end up going off sick and I along with others are reaching burnout. Time off to recover is not good enough, staffing is terrible and I feel that there is no opportunity to develop in the role.”

“For far too long there has been a lack of quality in applications and recruitment.”

“Absence has driven resourcing into the ground, and there are insufficient staff available to carry out the role as it was intended. This knock-on effect means we are running below the correct staffing levels, stress is high for supervisors.”

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Suggested Improvements

Strategic leadership / Management engagement / Visibility



progressive

Key Insights:

- Overall, results in the main report show that views on senior management have improved from last year; however, there is still a need for improvements to be made.
- Some colleagues feel disconnected from management and express a desire for more transparent communication and visible leadership presence to improve morale and operational effectiveness.
- Was suggested that important information regarding changes, policies, or decisions is often not shared in a timely or clear manner.
- A lack of presence leads to a perception that management is disconnected from the realities of the job.
- A perception that management is more focused on their own agendas and promotions rather than the wellbeing of their teams, resulting in low morale and disengagement among staff.

What Colleagues Said:

“Internal communication/visibility has improved but too much work still being done in silos, so organisation struggles to maintain joined-up approach. Strong vision from COT has given clearer direction of travel.”

“Senior leadership must clearly back officers who for the majority want to do the right thing, however the lack of support is creating more and more hesitancy which in turn increases the risk to officers.”

“Sometimes it seems like the information is only shared with the high ranks and it doesn't reach colleagues who would benefit/are affected.”

“Senior management need to be seen so that they can have open and honest conversation with officers.”

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“Speaking from a frontline basis we feel we are not seen, heard or appreciated. We are rarely spoken to or seen by senior management, rarely are we complimented or appreciated for the work we do.”

“I think communication can be improved, for example much of the literature around the Force Mobilisation Model was unclear initially.”

Suggested Improvements

Wellbeing / Support / Protection / Pay



progressive

Key Insights:

- Concerns about mental health resources and overall support structures are prevalent.
- Indicates a need for enhanced protective measures and support systems to ensure the wellbeing of colleagues, particularly officers on the frontline.
- Frontline officers, in particular, report experiencing significant mental and physical fatigue due to excessive workloads and the constant demand to cover for absent colleagues.
- The cancellation of rest days and last-minute shift changes contribute to an unsustainable work-life balance, causing low morale and a sense of being undervalued.

What Colleagues Said:

“Any welfare concerns and provisions for officers feel like a lip service. Officers are frequently put in harm's way, especially in terms of insufficient resourcing to support frontline officers”

“Constant issues trying to get time off having an adverse effect on the health of staff and subsequently, sickness rates through the roof in certain divisions. Get officers out of offices, control rooms & civilianised posts and back into the job they were trained to do.”

“Mental health and wellbeing support, are very much reactive positions for the organisation. More needs to be done to introduce routine wellbeing assessments particularly for operational frontline officers to ensure we are spotting signs of distress earlier to allow us to proactively react to this.”

“There is a recently expanded department at Dalmarnock full of materials from textbooks and academia [on wellbeing] and how great it all is but the reality is that officers would be happy if they had a decent pair of trousers, a meal break and finished on time.”

“I have many years police service and have never felt as stressed, disheartened and burnt out as I currently do.”

“Wellbeing is meant to matter but yet we still have not been allocated leave for 2026/2027.”

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Positives about working at PS – Top 3 themes



Q52. Thinking about the last 12 months, what are the positives about working in the organisation that the organisation must continue to do?

- The three themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Teamwork and Camaraderie – 968 mentions, 19%
 2. Satisfaction with current role – 703 mentions, 14%
 3. Technology and Equipment – 578 mentions, 12%
- It is important to note that although many colleagues responded with positive aspects about working in the organisation, there were also a number of colleagues who felt that they could not answer positively or gave both positive and negative responses. This section focusses specifically on the positive comments given.
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

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Positives about working at PS

Teamwork and camaraderie



progressive

Key Insights:

- Many expressed a strong sense of support and solidarity from their colleagues, which significantly contributes to their job satisfaction.
- They appreciate the flexibility and cooperation within their teams, especially during high-pressure situations.
- Colleagues frequently mention that working closely together during high-pressure situations enhances their bond. This shared experience not only helps them navigate difficulties but also creates a familial atmosphere within teams.
- The ability to adapt to each other's needs and support one another in various roles is frequently praised. They appreciate the flexibility that allows them to assist one another, which further strengthens their working relationships.

What Colleagues Said:

“Working in a smaller more settled team with fewer changes in personnel has made a big difference in continuing.”

“Giving line managers freedom to manage their own teams.”

“I have a team of officers who I can rely on to carry out their duties to the best of their ability with everything that is put upon them.”

“Sense of purpose I receive, working as part of a good team and being appreciated the majority of the time. Working with good people and feeling part of a larger purpose.”

“The positive relationships with operational colleagues and feeling valued by them for work done.”

“The positives solely relate to my team and immediate line management who make coming to work bearable”

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Positives about working at PS

Satisfaction with current role



progressive

Key Insights:

- Many cited reasons that related to being satisfied with their job.
- Job variety and the ability to make a positive impact on their communities were key motivators and reasons for overall job satisfaction.
- Job stability is frequently mentioned as a significant positive aspect, with many appreciating the security that comes with their positions, particularly in a climate of uncertainty in the job market.
- Many acknowledged that the salary is competitive and contributes towards job satisfaction.

What Colleagues Said:

“Job security is the real positive at the moment for the organisation as a whole.

The change of senior management within the division last year, improved engagement by them and a feeling that they do listen and make changes when it is within their power to do so.”

“Job stability is a positive, but work demands are growing, having to do more for less.”

“In the current climate, the Police still offers a secure and stable job where many other areas of employment do not. The organisation still provides many benefits to its employees by virtue of being a Police officer or Police staff.”

“The positives are that the terms & conditions and salary for the job that I do are excellent and allow me to have a good life out of work ”

“I have always felt the salary is a positive, many may disagree but I think we are well paid.”

“I am now in a role that I enjoy and feel that I contribute to the welfare of the Officers that serve”

Positives about working at PS

Technology and equipment



progressive

Key Insights:

- Comments show an appreciation for the advancements in technology and support systems within Police Scotland.
- Colleagues emphasised the positive impact of new technologies such as DESC and Body Worn Video (BWV), which have improved efficiency and officer safety. It is felt that these tools enable them to perform their duties more effectively and reduce administrative burdens.
- Colleagues expressed a desire for continued investment in technology and processes that facilitate efficient policing. There is a recognition that while improvements have been made, further efforts are necessary to maintain momentum and address existing challenges.

What Colleagues Said:

“BWV is a definite positive.

Improvements in IT are always welcome, and any streamlining of "paperwork" is unquestionably a bonus.”

“Recent technological/systems have been a pleasant improvement. DESC for example. Updates to Case etc. They are all contributory factors.”

“Introducing new technology which has streamlined processes that before were bureaucratic i.e. DESC, CASE etc. Understanding the demand in the organisation and delivering against core function.”

“Continue to invest in infrastructure such as IT systems and body worn video that will make working more efficient.”

“The introduction of systems such as DESC, upgraded UNIFI, and Case have been a massive improvement.”

“The Chief Constable's commitment to reform e.g. introducing BWV and pushing back on court demands are excellent.”

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Q53a. Please could you describe your reasons for recommending the organisation as an employer?

- The three themes most frequently highlighted were:
 - Sense of purpose & public service – 886 mentions, 38%
 - Job security and stability – 429 mentions, 19%
 - Varied and interesting work – 357 mentions, 16%
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from colleagues.

Reasons for recommending PS as an employer

Sense of purpose & public service



progressive

Key Insights:

- Many highlight feelings of pride in being part of an organisation crucial for public safety, viewing their work as a calling that fosters meaningful change in people's lives.
- A significant number of respondents express a strong sense of fulfillment from serving the community.
- Many feel that their work has a direct positive impact on individuals' lives, reinforcing their commitment to public service.

What Colleagues Said:

"I feel like this is still a job which is more than that and is a career..... if the recruitment issues and standards were ironed out, I feel like this is still a job I'd recommend to anyone as I am proud to be a Police officer."

"Strong sense of professionalism, good working practices, terms and conditions in general. Working with purpose and striving to improve the lives of people working in Scotland."

"It provides an opportunity to make a contribution to ensuring our communities are better and safer places for everyone."

".....I take great pride in doing my bit for seeking justice for victims of crime."

"It feels good to know you have helped someone and made a difference."

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Reasons for recommending PS as an employer

Job security & stability



progressive

Key Insights:

- A sense of stability fosters loyalty and long-term commitment, complemented by benefits like pensions and sick pay that enhance their sense of security.
- Employees feel a strong sense of job security within the organisation, which is a significant draw, especially in the current economic climate.
- This stability allows them to focus more on their roles without the fear of redundancy.

What colleagues said:

“It’s a secure job, with a competitive salary and development opportunities.”

“Whilst the job has changed over the years, it is still a job like no other, which offers security and a good pension.”

“Policing provides a secure working environment in unpredictable times. Police Scotland, despite its faults, provides a good salary and conditions.”

“Secure, the job is the people and the people at my level are decent and hard-working individuals.”

“A job for life.”

“I would recommend this job for job security, regular overtime, and set shift patterns, which in the current financial climate is a positive.”

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Reasons for recommending PS as an employer

Varied & interesting work



progressive

Key Insights:

- The variety of work contributes significantly to job satisfaction, providing opportunities for skill development and specialisation that keep colleagues engaged and motivated.
- They appreciate the dynamic nature of the job, where no two days are the same, which keeps their work engaging.
- Colleagues value the diversity of roles and experiences available within the organisation.

What colleagues said:

“Great organisation in terms of support. Interesting job like no other. Everyday is different and you'll never get bored.”

“The role present any individual with a fast pace, ever-changing dynamic, that can be challenging and enjoyable.”

“Satisfying career. Opportunities to move around Scotland. Opportunities to perform a number of different roles within the organisation.”

“Wide-ranging challenging roles and opportunities.”

“Stable place to work and always interesting. Plenty of avenues to go down throughout your career.”

“The opportunity exists at constable level to try varied roles and move departments and offices to gain experience in other areas.”

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Reasons for not recommending PS as an employer – Top 3 themes

Q54. Please could you describe your reasons for not recommending the organisation as an employer?

- The three themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Undervalued by the organisation – 1217 mentions, 31%
 2. Lack of support – 810 mentions, 20%
 3. Poor work-life balance – 796 mentions, 20%
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Reasons for not recommending PS as an employer

Feeling undervalued



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Key Insights:

- Many colleagues feel their needs and concerns are not being heard or valued, leading to a pervasive sense of being just a number within a large bureaucratic system.
- Colleagues report feeling overworked and under-resourced, often facing unrealistic expectations without adequate support from management.
- This disconnect is further exacerbated by a culture of blame and micromanagement, where officers feel scrutinised and unsupported in their roles.
- These factors contribute to low morale, burnout, and a reluctance among officers to recommend a career within the organisation.

What Colleagues Said:

“You are just a number. You don't matter to the organisation. Constantly having to fight for time off, payment you are entitled to, better conditions.”

“Support for staff is dire and it's apparent that "Welfare" is merely a word on the Intranet. I have at no point felt more like "Just a number" than I do now.”

“I don't feel that officers are valued and provided with the appropriate training to do their roles safely. We are not respected or valued by the communities we serve.”

“I want my family to work in an environment where they feel valued, where they are heard (not just listened to but heard), one that does not become their life but offers them a chance to have a good life, a career that supports becoming the best version of themselves. Police Scotland does not offer that. The organisation has lost its way.”

“Quite simply you are just a number and aside from direct line management, no one cares about you. When you have a member of SMT attend shift briefings to discuss officers concerns and then simply have them pushed aside it is impossible to feel valued or important.”

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Reasons for not recommending PS as an employer

Lack of support



Key Insights:

- Many express feeling undervalued and unsupported by management, impacting their morale and job satisfaction.
- A lack of support from line and senior management during crises is frequently mentioned, with colleagues feeling their welfare is not prioritised.
- Negative portrayals in the media lead to a lack of respect for their roles, diminishing their sense of support.

What colleagues said:

“Policing has changed so much over the years in the way it treats its officers. The view that they would give you support should you receive a spurious complaint now does not apply. Officers are now reluctant to speak out or deal with people appropriately for the situation as they are scared that someone will find alternative meaning and they will end up on a disciplinary procedure for the most minor of matters when it does not seem proportionate.”

“We feel very much as if it's the public and media versus the Police, and unless we are perfect, it feels like we are not backed publicly by senior management.”

“You get abuse from the public for doing your job and then are not supported by the SMT for doing your job.”

“New staff have little life experience and don't have the support of experienced officers once initial training is complete.”

Reasons for not recommending PS as an employer

Poor work-life balance



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Key Insights:

- Colleagues report increasing demands without sufficient staffing, leading to feelings of being overwhelmed and unable to balance personal commitments.
- Many express frustration over the frequent cancellation of rest days, often disrupting personal plans and contributing to instability in their work-life balance.
- The job's emotional demands, coupled with insufficient mental health support, make it challenging for officers to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

What colleagues said:

“There is no work life balance in response policing, people are expected to stay on, get their rest days cancelled and there is no benefits in return.”

“Shifts are not compatible with a happy family life. We are not compensated enough for things such as cancelled days off / court often at short notice. Saving the organisation money is more important than officer wellbeing.”

“Having a home / family life is increasingly difficult with the relentless pressure at work and the difficulty in getting annual leave approved due to the resourcing picture.”

“You will not get the emotional support you require. Your home life will suffer as you try to deal with the trauma and apart from colleagues going through the same thing, nobody cares as everyone else is prioritising their next step up the ladder and they don't want to rock the boat. The few good supervisors who do genuinely care end up burning out.”

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Verbal/Assault by Public: Satisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Top themes

Q42. Why were you satisfied with the support received?

- The top positive themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Support from immediate line management – 356 mentions
 2. Support from immediate colleagues – 40 mentions
- It is important to note that even though colleagues expressed they were satisfied, some still gave negative responses about the support received and about how it is normalised and expected as part of the job. This section focusses specifically on the positive responses.
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Verbal/Assault by Public: Satisfaction with support received when reporting incident - Support from immediate line manager



Key Insights:

- Many reported feeling supported by their immediate supervisors during challenging incidents, which is crucial for their wellbeing.
- Many mentioned specific instances where their line managers checked in on them after incidents, demonstrating a proactive approach to support.
- Colleagues noted that the support helped to foster a positive work environment and encouraged open communication about experiences.

What Colleagues Said:

“There is sufficient support from colleagues and direct line managers, however due to the nature of the job we know we will face similar situations time and again.”

“Superb support from front line management. But it ends there!”

“My first line manager and inspector were supportive and raised this higher but I never received a response and nothing has been communicated to me regarding the incident.”

“Line manager was good at discussing the situation with me and respecting my wishes when it comes to discussing incidents.”

Verbal/Assault by Public: Satisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Support from immediate colleagues



Key Insights:

- Many respondents expressed gratitude for the emotional and practical support provided by their immediate colleagues, often describing their teams as a strong support network.
- It was noted that discussing incidents with peers helped them process their experiences, fostering a sense of camaraderie.
- Several comments highlighted the importance of humor as a coping mechanism after difficult incidents, indicating that colleagues often lighten the mood during debriefs, which contributes positively to morale.
- Support was also evident in more formal contexts, with colleagues and supervisors offering assistance through official channels after incidents, demonstrating a commitment to their well-being.

What Colleagues Said:

"I discussed incidents with my team as they are a good support network."

"Feel like you are only a number in this role but peers make it more bearable."

"After discussing it with peers, they would usually add a joke or two to assist in helping to laugh the incident off."

"Verbal decompression and 'venting' is usually how we deal with such incidents on the shift and as a team we are excellent at supporting one another and 'talking it out.'"

"My team supported me after being assaulted / verbally abused. I was offered the appropriate support through official channels."

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Verbal/Assault by Public: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Top themes



Q42. Why were you dissatisfied with the support received?

- The top themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. No support received / management didn't care – 87 mentions
 2. Normalisation / expectation of abuse – 67 mentions
- The next few slides will provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Verbal/Assault by Public: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – No support received / management didn't care



Key Insights:

- Some colleagues frequently feel that their wellbeing is not prioritised, with many reporting that the emphasis is placed on paperwork and administrative tasks over providing adequate support after incidents of abuse.
- Many officers express frustration at the lack of follow-up or genuine concern from their line managers after being assaulted or verbally abused, with management often dismissing incidents as "part of the job."

What Colleagues Said:

"Felt the incident was not taken seriously and any admin required to be completed was deemed more important than my wellbeing."

"There is no support. All you get is a generic email telling you that your welfare matters and nobody should be assaulted etc and is signed off as being from the area commander. It is the same email that is sent every time and is sent out by the governance department. It is not sent directly by the area commander."

"Unless you suffer a serious injury, the aftercare is minimal to none."

"Nothing worse than the person who assaults you being released before you even finish your shift."

"There was no support in place and no benefit received even when physically assaulted."

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Verbal/Assault by Public: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Normalisation / Expectation of abuse



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Key Insights:

- Some feel that the culture within policing often accepts verbal and physical abuse as a regular aspect of the job.
- This leads to a lack of accountability for offenders and discouragement among officers to report incidents.
- Some colleagues report feeling unsupported after incidents of abuse, with minimal follow-up or concern from management, which reinforces the notion that such experiences are simply part of their role.
- Officers express frustration that their reports of abuse are treated as routine paperwork rather than significant incidents.

What Colleagues Said:

“Being assaulted is just state of normality in the job, even if the organisation doesn't say so, they act as if it is and actions speak louder than words.”

“This has, sadly, become a common expected part of the job role and after years of service no longer has any impact on my wellbeing.”

“We, as police officers, are expected to take a level of abuse from members of the public as when reported to the courts these charges are used as bargain chip for guilty pleas of other charges.”

“It was not taken seriously, and I was met with the attitude of that type of abuse is expected and part of the job.”

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Verbal/Assault by Public: Reasons for not reporting incident (Q43) – Top 3 themes

Q43. Please could you describe the reasons for not reporting or discussing the incident with peers/supervisor/manager?

- The three themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Part of job expectation – 338 mentions, 28%
 2. Ineffective / Nothing will be done – 190 mentions, 16%
 3. Regular occurrence – 176 mentions, 15%
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Verbal/Assault by Public: Reasons for not reporting incident

Part of job expectation



progressive

Key Insights:

- There is a belief that experiencing verbal abuse is an inherent aspect of their role and many have come to accept verbal abuse as a standard part of their daily interactions while on duty.
- Several comments suggest a culture where such experiences are normalised, contributing to a desensitisation toward public verbal aggression.

What Colleagues Said:

“Didn't think reporting it would help.
We work with people who are very
volatile and this is just part of the job
that you have to accept.”

“Verbal abuse has simply become
part of the job. In almost all cases,
the verbal abuse is not personal, it's
often targeted at the uniform or the
organisation itself.”

“Verbal abuse is just part of the
job, its not right but you just get on
with it. It is becoming more
frequent, and I would say now on a
daily basis.”

“My role involves particularly sensitive cases,
the Police activity and nature of enquiries
affect people differently and I am aware that
people may struggle to control their
emotions.”

“While taking calls its part of the job
when people are angry upset or at a low
time in their life.”

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Verbal/Assault by Public: Reasons for not reporting incident Ineffective / Nothing will be done



Key Insights:

- Frustration is felt by officers regarding the lack of action taken in response to reported incidents of verbal abuse.
- Many voiced concerns about the futility of reporting such behaviour, as they believe it leads to little or no consequences for the abusers.
- A perception of inefficacy within the current systems of accountability and support, leading officers to feel unsupported and unprotected in their roles.

What Colleagues Said:

“.....the criminal justice system and Scottish Government do not take a firm view on people who abuse officers and I do not feel supported by them at all.”

“It is now part of the job and verbal abuse is almost pointless reporting to the courts.”

“There is no support from the courts, which filters down.”

“Whenever it has been raised in the past, no action has been taken and it is quite clear there is no concern for staff welfare around this matter.”

“Although I would be listened to, we as a service don't do enough to challenge the behaviours as somewhere along the way it has "come with the job". I feel that any response from line management would amount to lip service only.”

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Verbal/Assault by Public: Reasons for not reporting incident

Regular occurrence



Key Insights:

- It happens regularly so colleagues said they would spend a lot of time reporting incidents if they did report every time.
- Many respondents noted that such occurrences are not only common but are often expected, particularly in high-pressure environments.
- This regularity of abuse not only affects the morale of the officers but also shapes their interactions with the public, with many adopting coping mechanisms to deal with the heightened tensions encountered during their service.

What Colleagues Said:

“I have experienced this on an ongoing basis throughout my service and could not pinpoint or specifically report each incident due to time constraints.”

“I work in Police Custody, being verbally abused is a weekly occurrence from prisoners.”

“It happens often from public so feel that If I was to raise concerns every time I have been verbally abused it would be a waste of time.”

“Don't have time or resources to robustly deal with every time we come across it.”

“We get abused all the time on the streets, if you were to go to management every time it loses its impact.”

Workplace harassment/bullying/discrimination: Satisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Top themes

Q49. Why were you satisfied with the support received?

- The positive themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Peer support / Felt supported / Support put in place – 45 mentions
 2. Incident investigated / Handled well / Resolved – 36 mentions
- Although satisfied with the support received, some gave negative responses as to why they weren't more satisfied or how the process has made them feel. This section focusses specifically on the positive comments given. Reasons for dissatisfaction is covered separately.
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Workplace incident: Satisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Feeling supported



Key Insights:

- Supportive teammates and management played a crucial role in enabling employees to navigate their reporting experiences.
- For some, concerns were genuinely heard and addressed by their line managers. This made them feel valued and supported, with comments highlighting instances where managers listened attentively and provided reassurance about the steps that could be taken.
- Gratitude expressed for the swift handling of their reports. Timely responses from management helped alleviate concerns and promote a positive resolution, reinforcing their feeling of being supported.

What Colleagues Said:

“My line manager was very supportive and advised me of my options for making an official report, I declined this and my choice was respected however measures were put in place locally to ensure no further stress or upset was caused by the person involved.”

“My line manager was understanding and supportive whilst being unbiased and talked me through the appropriate channels should I have wanted to report the incident officially.”

“First line management is, and always very supportive. Above this support falls away very quickly.”

“My supervisor listened and supported me fully. They showed empathy.”

Workplace incident: Satisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Incident resolved



progressive

Key Insights:

- Some colleagues reported that issues were addressed swiftly and professionally, highlighting the importance of prompt intervention by management.
- This quick response not only resolved concerns but also reinforced trust in the system.
- Some felt that the outcomes of their reports were satisfactory, with effective resolutions being implemented, such as moving individuals responsible for inappropriate behavior.

What Colleagues Said:

“Incident taken seriously by management/senior management and changes implemented.”

“I told my manager the next day about the incident and they dealt with it straight away with the individual involved. Felt even more supported as my manager said I should have informed them even sooner.”

“Was very satisfied that the report was progressed appropriately and taken seriously.”

Workplace harassment/bullying/discrimination: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Top 3 themes

Q49. Why were you dissatisfied with the support received?

- The top themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. No action taken / Not resolved / Still ongoing – 189 mentions
 2. Bullying involved – 90 mentions
 3. Inadequate resolutions – 57 mentions
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Workplace incident: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – No action taken / Not resolved



Key Insights:

- Some colleagues express feelings of frustration, helplessness, and a sense of being ignored when they report incidents, leading to ongoing issues without resolution.
- There is a perception by some that their concerns were dismissed or minimised by management.
- There is a call for more effective communication and action from leadership to address grievances seriously and create a safer, more supportive work environment.

What Colleagues Said:

“No action appears to have been taken. Supervisors appear to lack training and knowledge in HR and processes to deal with bullying.”

“Line manager appeared to listen and offer support etc. however discussed actions were not taken to my knowledge and no further check ins or support offered.”

“Despite reporting various issues, they were never addressed and rectified properly.”

“The person is problematic and seems to be able to do whatever they want without real consequences. There is a wider culture within Police Scotland for moving the problem rather than solving it.”

Workplace incident: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Bullying involved



progressive

Key Insights:

- There is frustration and disappointment regarding a perceived bullying culture within the organisation.
- There is a sense that incidents are not taken seriously, not dealt with immediately and those who have the concern are typically the ones that are moved/move on/move division.
- Similar to reasons for not reporting the incident, there is a fear of repercussions when reporting or a lack of action taken given the seniority level of some of those accused.

What Colleagues Said:

“ When supervisors were made aware they were full of false promises and the bullying continued for months.”

“My line managers were engaging in conduct which I believe was bullying, harassment and discrimination, this was ongoing despite me raising concerns on several occasions. I was eventually moved.”

“I was bullied, discriminated against and harassed. This was reported and nothing was done. I was then moved to another area.”

Workplace incident: Dissatisfaction with support received when reporting incident – Inadequate resolutions



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Key Insights:

- Some felt that their concerns were not taken seriously, and the lack of meaningful action left them feeling powerless.
- For some colleagues, the resolutions put in place did not meet their expectations or address the core issues raised.
- Small number of comments in relation to the grievance procedure being ineffective, therefore concerns were not being addressed adequately.

What Colleagues Said:

“Senior management only want to prevent grievances and do not deal with the actual issues or the persons involved.”

“I was satisfied by the line management response to my concerns, however do not feel the situation has been addressed fully with the individuals concerns.”

“The organisation apparently empowers you to do the right thing however in my personal experience, when you do stand up and call out inappropriate behaviour you are persecuted, harassed and made to feel like you are in the wrong.”

“I feel that this was not investigated impartially as it was kept within division. There were no further proceedings taken against the individual.”

Workplace harassment/bullying/discrimination: Reasons for not reporting incident– Top 3 themes

Q50. Please could you describe the reasons for not reporting the incident?

- The top themes most frequently highlighted were:
 1. Fear of repercussions / being identified / ignored – 198 mentions, 38%
 2. Senior/Line Management involvement – 144 mentions, 28%
 3. Lack of confidence in complaint procedures – 89 mentions, 17%
- The next few slides provide further detail on these themes with supporting quotes from our colleagues.

Workplace harassment/bullying/discrimination: Reasons for not reporting incident – Fear of repercussions / Being identified



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Key Insights:

- Colleagues expressed a strong belief that reporting incidents could lead to personal and professional retaliation, including loss of job security or being moved to less desirable positions.
- Many articulated feelings of disempowerment and a lack of trust in the organisation's ability to handle complaints confidentially and effectively.
- Several comments highlighted the perception that management often protects those in higher ranks, making it difficult for lower-ranking officers to voice their concerns without fear of repercussions.

What Colleagues Said:

"I do not feel confident that if I reported the issues I am having, that this would not be detrimental to the security in my role, and that I would not be further isolated."

"Incidents have not been reported through fear of being ostracised if an officer were to 'go against the grain' and look for a change in behaviour. Also incidents were not reported after seeing poor examples of how similar situations had been dealt with by line management before."

"Because the organisation doesn't actually care about employees and sweeps the wrong doings of senior employees under the carpet and wants to turn a blind eye to racism, discrimination and harassment."

"Not reported as, in my experience, NOTHING would get done about it and as the reporter I'd be ostracised thus making my job lonelier."

"Feel unable to report and that repercussions both personal and professional do not justify making complaint."

"Reporting incidents in Police Scotland, regardless of whether they are backed by evidence or not, only ever results in detriment to the person reporting, not the person(s) engaging in the inappropriate behaviour, particularly if the complaint is against a manager."

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Workplace harassment/bullying/discrimination: Reasons for not reporting incident – Senior/Line management involvement



Key Insights:

- Colleagues indicated a lack of trust in senior management, expressing concerns that complaints would either be ignored or lead to retaliation. Phrases like "fall on deaf ears" and "turn a blind eye" were commonly noted.
- Employees reported feeling labeled as "troublemakers" for speaking out about issues, which discourages open dialogue and reinforces a culture of silence.
- Some feel that management is complicit in perpetuating these behaviors.
- Specific incidents highlighted a lack of accountability among senior managers, with several verbatims detailing how complaints against them often result in further isolation and career jeopardy for the complainants.

What colleagues said:

"It would fall on deaf ears as senior management often turn a blind eye"

"My line manager is one of the ones responsible."

"It would not have made any positive difference. It's the norm for managers to invalidate concerns raised by anyone on a lower pay grade than they are. Staff who do raise their head above the parapet are generally then known as trouble-makers."

"As it was from senior management, so who can you tell."

"The higher bosses contributed on the discrimination, and I didn't know who to go to, to talk."

Workplace harassment/bullying/discrimination: Reasons for not reporting incident – Lack of confidence in complaint process



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Key Insights:

- Further supporting concerns previously mentioned around fear of repercussions and involvement management, colleagues frequently articulated feelings of futility regarding the complaints process, stating that previous issues raised were either ignored or inadequately addressed.
- The perceived culture of silence is reinforced by a belief that senior management does not genuinely care about employee concerns, leading to a perception that complaints are not taken seriously.
- Comments suggest instances of bullying and harassment are often said to be dismissed or trivialised, with employees feeling discouraged from speaking out due to a lack of faith in the system.

What colleagues said:

“Nothing will change even if reported.”

“They shouldn't be a supervisor! I will no longer report anything, if you are friends with management the issue gets brushed under the carpet.”

“The person responsible for the bullying and discrimination are the very people that I would report the issue to. There are no methods that would protect anonymity. I have been discouraged from reporting anything previously in the past.”

“Don't really see the point in bringing it to the supervisors attention. I have previously spoken about it and was advised to "brush it off" and that I need to "grow a thicker skin”.”