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Northamptonshire OPFCC Employee Research

**Ipsos report for the Office of the
Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime
Commissioner**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Recent high-profile events have placed a significant amount of attention on the prevalence of misogynistic behaviour and the general workplace culture within police forces across England and Wales. The kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard in March 2021 led to the Metropolitan Police Service appointing Baroness Louise Casey to undertake an independent review of the force's 'culture and standards of behaviour', with this being completed in March 2023.¹ Prior to the Casey Review, then-Home Secretary Priti Patel commissioned HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to undertake an assessment of vetting procedures, misconduct and misogyny in the police service, with HMICFRS publishing its report in November 2022.² Fire and Rescue Services have come under significant scrutiny too. For example, in November 2022, an independent review of workplace culture in London Fire Brigade was published, with this leading to HMICFRS moving London Fire Brigade into an enhanced level of monitoring.³ Meanwhile, an HMICFRS inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, carried out in autumn 2020 with the report published in July 2022, found that the Service 'required improvement' when assessing how well it looked after its people.⁴

In this context, the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) commissioned Ipsos UK to carry out research among employees across the three organisations for which it is responsible (the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service).

1.2 Organisations of interest

The three organisations differ significantly from one another in terms of their size and employee profile – and these differences should be taken into account when considering the information contained in this report.

Northamptonshire Police is a large organisation. According to an OPFCC staff structure document⁵, in addition to the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and two Assistant Chief Constables, Northamptonshire Police has more than 2,300 members of staff; these are divided between Officers (1,315) and PCSOs (98) and other members of staff (929). The Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is, in comparison, a smaller organisation. According to its Gender Pay Gap Report published in August 2021, the Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service had just over 500 employees, with the majority of these being firefighters (whole-time or retained).⁶ In comparison to the Police and Fire and

¹ See Baroness Casey Review, Final Report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service (March 2023), available online at: <https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/baroness-casey-review/update-march-2023/baroness-casey-review-march-2023.pdf>.

² See HMICFRS, An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service (November 2022), available online at: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publication-html/an-inspection-of-vetting-misconduct-and-misogyny-in-the-police-service/>

³ See Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (November 2022), available online at: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7211/independent-culture-review-of-lfb-report953f61809024e20c7505a869af1f416c56530867cb99fb946ac81475cfd8cb38.pdf>.

⁴ See HMICFRS, Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22 Effectiveness, efficiency and people An inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (July 2022), available online at: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/northamptonshire-fire-and-rescue-service-report-2021-22.pdf>.

⁵ Information taken from Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Staff Structure (2020), available online at: <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Staff-Structure-for-Website-V6.pdf>.

⁶ Information taken from Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service Gender Pay Gap report (2021), available online at: <https://northantspfcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Fire-Gender-Pay-Gap-report-2020-2021.pdf>; and <https://northantspfcc.org.uk/category/opfcc/staff-structure/>.

Rescue Service, the OPFCC is a much smaller organisation, with around 50 employees.⁷ Various employees – largely in professional services positions – are employed by one organisation but work across either one or both of the others too; these positions are known as ‘Enabling Services’.⁸

The organisations also differ in terms of the type of people who work for them. Most notably, the organisations’ gender profiles differ significantly. According to its 2021 Gender Pay Gap Report, the vast majority (82%) of Fire and Rescue Service employees were men. In contrast, there is a roughly even balance between male and female employees within the Northamptonshire Police workforce according to its 2021-2022 Gender Pay Gap Report. However, the gender balance within the Police force differs according to role: 64% of Police Officers are men compared with 36% who are women. Among Police Staff this is reversed, with 68% being women and 32% being men.⁹ Meanwhile, the OPFCC reports that around four-fifths of its staff are women.¹⁰

1.3 Research Aims and Methodology

The research sought to assess the broader workplace culture, to understand the prevalence of discrimination – in particular misogyny and gender-biased attitudes, as well as experiences of gender-based discrimination across the three organisations.

The research comprised two elements.

1. **The first element was a survey**, which all employees of the three organisations were invited to take part in. Interviews were conducted online between 12 December 2022 and 16 January 2023. 3,608 invites were sent, with each person receiving a unique link to complete the survey.

Overall, from the 3,608 invites that were sent out, **920 employees completed the survey**. This equates to a roughly 25% response rate, however the true response rate is likely to be slightly higher as some employees had multiple email addresses to which invites were sent. Of the 920 people to complete the survey, **745 were people employed by Northamptonshire Police, 141 from Fire and Rescue Service and 34 from the OPFCC**.

The survey contained questions covering the following themes: general attitudes towards the workplace environment, individual experiences of discriminatory behaviour in the workplace and perceptions of society.¹¹ **The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.**

For the section covering individual experiences of discriminatory behaviour in the workplace, questions were designed with reference to the ‘Everyday Discrimination Scale’, in order to understand the types of discriminatory behaviours experienced and the personal characteristics that these behaviours related to.¹² For analysis purposes, the survey also confirmed the

⁷ Information taken from Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Staff Structure (2020), available online at: <https://www.northantspfcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Staff-Structure-for-Website-V6.pdf>.

⁸ <https://northantspfcc.org.uk/our-work/enabling-frontline-services/>. Whether staff members work in such positions was **not** captured in the staff survey. However, it was an issue covered in the in-depth interviews.

⁹ See Northamptonshire Police, Gender Pay Gap Report: 2021 to 2022 (2022), available online at:

https://www.northants.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/northamptonshire/disclosure_2022/northamptonshire-police-gender-pay-gap-report-2021-2022.pdf.

¹⁰ <https://northantspfcc.org.uk/category/opfcc/staff-structure/>.

¹¹ The survey also contained questions on staff members’ perceptions of the safety of the Northamptonshire area. Data from these questions have not been analysed in this report. Instead, these have been analysed in the report for the separate community research strand, which sought to understand the Northamptonshire public’s views of safety in the county.

¹² See Williams, D.R., ‘Measuring Discrimination Resource’. 2016. available online at:

https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/davidwilliams/files/measuring_discrimination_resource_june_2016.pdf. See also Williams, D.R., Yu, Y.,

organisation participants are employed by and collected details about employees' roles, their length of service and various demographic data.

The median interview completion time for the employee survey was 15 minutes, while the mean completion time was 21 minutes. The greater mean length was driven by participants who had reported experiencing or witnessing discriminatory behaviour at work in the last 12 months, as well as participants who restarted the survey on at least one occasion.

2. The second element of the research comprised 17 in-depth interviews with people from across the three organisations who had reported in the survey that they had experienced or witnessed gender-based discrimination in the workplace and who had agreed to be recontacted by Ipsos. These interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams between 21 March and 10 May 2023.

For the in-depth interviews, 30 participants matched the criteria set out above and were invited to take part, and no further quotas were set. Of the interviews achieved, **eight** were with those who have experienced gender-based discrimination, **seven** were with those who have both experienced and witnessed gender-based discrimination in the workplace, and **two** were with those who had witnessed but not experienced gender-based discrimination. **13** interviews were with those currently employed by Northamptonshire Police, **two** with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service employees and **two** with OPFCC employees. **14** were with women and **three** were with men. See below for a more detailed profile of those who participated.

The depth interviews built upon themes covered in the employee survey to provide a richer qualitative understanding of workplace culture across the organisations the OPFCC is responsible for. Further to this, the interviews covered various scenarios related to gender discrimination in the workplace and the likelihood of these occurring, personal experiences of gender-based discrimination, and views on what could be improved.

Interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and were carried out using a discussion guide which can be found in **Appendix B**.

1.4 Interpretation of the data

1.4.1 Quantitative survey

- Where percentages in this report do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multi-code questions or the exclusion of 'Don't know', 'Not applicable' and 'Prefer not to say' answers.
- For the survey, all employees were invited to take part, with responses received from those willing to take part. As such, the results may be subject to non-response bias. The survey reflects the perceptions of those who took part and is not necessarily representative of all employees across the three organisations. Data have also not been weighted.
- All subgroup differences mentioned in the report are statistically significant unless otherwise stated. Where there are particularly relevant differences between organisations and employees with different roles within an organisation, these have been highlighted. However, the small base sizes in some

Jackson, J.S., and Anderson, N.B. "Racial Differences in Physical and Mental Health: Socioeconomic Status, Stress, and Discrimination." *Journal of Health Psychology*. 1997; 2(3):335-351. The questions in the staff survey did not directly replicate those from the Everyday Discrimination Scale. Instead the Everyday Discrimination Scale was used as a template from which questions for the staff survey were developed.

organisations, roles and demographic groups means significance testing was not possible across all sub-groups, and that these findings should be treated as indicative only.

1.4.2 Qualitative interviews

- The qualitative aspect of the research was designed to be exploratory and to provide an insight into the perceptions, feelings and behaviours of employees who have experienced or witnessed gender-based discrimination in the workplace.
- It is important to note that these qualitative findings are not statistically representative of the views of the audiences included.
- It is important to remember that, although the perceptions expressed through the qualitative interviews may not always be factually accurate, they represent the truth to those who relay them.
- Although the sample included people from all three organisations, those based in the OPFCC often focussed on the fire service in their interview, rather than talking about incidents in their own organisation. Similarly, some police employees discussed experiences when interacting with fire services as well as experiences within their own organisation.

Findings from the qualitative interviews are included in blue boxes throughout this report.

1.5 Sub-group reporting

As well as reporting data at an overall level (i.e. across the three organisations combined), this report contains sub-group analysis of data collected as part of the survey. The table below sets out the terminology used to identify sub-groups in the report and criteria, based on responses to the questionnaire, that have been used to define these groups. Insofar as is possible, sub-groups identified in the report match those included in the data tables provided for this project.

1.5.1 Demographic sub-groups

Reference(s) used in report	Definition of sub-group	Question(s) used to define sub-group
Ethnic minorities / Ethnic minority employees	Employees who identify as belonging to the following ethnic groups: Mixed / multiple ethnicities; Asian / Asian British; Black / African / Caribbean / Black British; Other ethnic group	ETHNICITY
Members of the LGBT+ community; LGBT+ employees	Employees who identify as being gay or lesbian; bisexual; or other	SEXUALITY
Disabled employees; Employees with a disability	Employees who identify as having a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity	DISABILITY

1.5.2 Organisation / Role based sub-groups

Reference(s) used in report	Definition of sub-group	Question(s) used to define sub-group
Police employees	People employed by Northamptonshire Police	ORGANISATION_2A / ORGANISATION_2B
Fire and Rescue Service employees	People employed Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service	ORGANISATION_2A / ORGANISATION_2B
OPFCC employees	People employed by the Office of the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner	ORGANISATION_2A / ORGANISATION_2B
Police Officers	Police employees whose role is Police Constable / Officer; or Police Community Support Officer	ORGANISATION_3
Police Staff	Police employees whose role is Police Staff (e.g. Human Resources, IT, etc.) or Other	ORGANISATION_3
Firefighters	Fire and Rescue Service employees whose role is Whole Time Firefighter; or Retained Firefighter	ORGANISATION_3
Fire and Rescue Service Staff	Fire and Rescue Service employees whose role is Fire and Rescue Service staff or Other	ORGANISATION_3

1.6 Sample profiles

The below table sets out the profile of the samples achieved for both quantitative and qualitative strands of the research.

As noted above, results from the quantitative survey included in the report have not been weighted, and so cannot be considered as representative of views across the organisations. However, while data have not been weighted, the gender balance within the sample was broadly similar to the profile of all Fire and Rescue Service employees, OPFCC employees, and, separately, Police Officers and Police Staff.

Within the sample achieved, 22% of Fire and Rescue Service employees interviewed were women. According to the organisation's 2021 Gender Pay Gap Report, 18% of employees were women. 70% of the achieved sample were men compared with 82% of employees according to Gender Pay Gap report. Within the sample achieved, 8% of Fire and Rescue Service employees did not disclose their gender.

Among the small sample of OPFCC employees interviewed, 76% were women and 24% men. According to the OPFCC website, the proportion of its staff who are women is 80%.

Among Police Officers and PCSOs (referred to collectively as Police Officers in this report), 63% of the sample achieved were men and 36% women, matching the figures for Police Officers according to Northamptonshire Police's 2021-2022 Gender Pay Gap Report. Meanwhile, within the sample 70% of Other Police Staff were women and 28% men. According to the Gender Pay Gap Report, 68% of Police Staff were women and 32% men.

For the quantitative survey, asterisks have been included to indicate small base sizes. A single asterisk (*) indicates the base size for a particular sub-group is less than 100 and data for these groups should be interpreted with caution. A double asterisk (**) indicates the base size for a particular sub-group is less than 50 – and data for these groups should be considered as indicative only.

	Survey	In-Depth Interviews
	Total	Total
Total number	920	17
Organisation		
Police	745	13
Fire and Rescue Service	141	2
OPFCC	34**	2
Role		
Police Officers	324	6
Police Staff	413	7
Firefighters	84*	1
Other Fire & Rescue Service Staff	55*	1
Leadership / Line Management Responsibilities		
Yes – either	385	16
No - neither	512	1
Gender		
Male	428	3
Female	465	14
Age		
Up to 34	218	4
35-44	234	6
45-54	267	4
55+	171	3
Length of employment		
Less than 2 years	175	1
2-5 years	174	2

5-10 years	139	6
10 or more years	420	8
Ethnicity		
White	830	14
Ethnic minority	40**	2
-Parent/Legal guardian		
Yes	414	9
No	487	8
Sexuality		
Heterosexual/ straight	786	16
Gay / lesbian / bisexual / other	71*	0
Long term physical or mental health conditions, disabilities or illnesses		
Yes	217	3
No	627	13
Gender-discrimination experiences		
Experienced	69*	15
Witnessed	50**	9
Experienced or witnessed	98*	17

2 Executive Summary

This section presents a summary of findings from each of the chapters to follow:

2.1 Workplace Environment – Workplace Culture

- When it came to the workplace and management, although two-thirds (66%) agreed that the culture at their organisation was positive, this sentiment was weaker among those working for the Fire and Rescue Service (56%) and Police Officers (57%). It was also the case that most employees thought their manager supports them when they need it (82%), that their employer is open to making changes to improve the culture (62%), and that their employer would support them if they raised concerns about a colleague's behaviour or attitudes (67%). Again though, negative sentiment was stronger among Police Officers and Firefighters.

In the qualitative research, where people were recruited based on their experience or witnessing of gender discrimination, most were still positive about their workplace and their team, although participants were more negative about the culture of the Fire and Rescue Service.

- When it came to job satisfaction and opportunities, overall around four-fifths (79%) said they would likely choose to be employed by their organisation in two years' time. A similar proportion (80%) agreed they have a worthwhile job that makes a difference. However, positive sentiment was weaker on other measures related to this theme, including around whether a culture of unnecessary competition exists (41% disagreed, 21% agreed), that their workplace is somewhere they can be themselves (66% agreed) and that employees have the opportunity to develop their potential (56% agreed). There were generally higher levels of dissatisfaction with these measures among Police Officers, Firefighters and men.

In the qualitative research, there was a sense that some men felt women had benefited from positive discrimination. Women did not believe this was the case, and sometimes felt rumours were spread unfairly, so there is potentially some difference in perceptions of what is happening. In the quantitative research, men (41%), those aged 35-44 (47%), who have been employed for ten or more years (48%) and who are parents (42%) were more likely to have encountered someone with less experience or fewer qualifications get promoted before them.

- A sizeable minority of employees had encountered negative experiences linked to workplace opportunities, including not seeking new professional responsibilities for fear of not having enough time to do everything (32% ever experienced) and feeling as though they lack the skills and ability to take on a position of responsibility (25% ever experienced).

In the qualitative research, some participants identified reluctance to offer reasonable adjustments or to offer flexible, part-time or job-share options as a barrier to them having the role they wanted.

- When it came to perceptions of fairness, seven in ten (71%) felt comfortable speaking up about issues when they arise. However, a smaller proportion felt that their voice is listened to and respected (57%), and that they are fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities (53%). Opinion was more divided over whether people felt they had to work harder than others in similar roles, with 37%

agreeing and 31% disagreeing. Meanwhile, a third (35%) had ever experienced someone with less experience or fewer qualifications getting promoted before them. Negative sentiment on these matters was again more widespread among Police Officers and Fire and Rescue Service employees.

In the qualitative research, it was not uncommon for women to say they did not feel that men in the Fire and Rescue Service valued their professional skills and as such they did not feel like they were treated as equals. They described being talked over or talked down to in meetings. In most cases people thought that the promotion process was fair, although there were some exceptions.

2.2 Workplace Environment – Inclusion and Diversity

- Fewer felt that their organisation has a diverse workforce (58%) than said it is an inclusive environment (70%); nearly one in four (24%) disagreed that their organisation has a diverse workforce – with this sentiment stronger among Fire and Rescue Service (38% disagreed) and OPFCC (53% disagreed) employees.

In the qualitative research, participants noted that the Police had made a concerted effort to increase diversity, and participants thought that this had resulted in a more inclusive workforce.

- Most people believed employees are treated fairly regardless of their characteristics, but they were more likely to say this is not the case when it comes to gender or part-time working status. Fire and Rescue Service employees (31%) were most likely to say that staff are not treated equally regardless of their gender.
- Although women were no less likely than men to say that everyone is treated equally according to their gender, they were more likely to feel that men and women do not have equal access to professional training, the same salary levels for equivalent experience and skills, and the same benefits for equivalent levels of experience and skills.
- Such differences co-existed alongside differences in general attitudes towards gender. Although misogynistic attitudes were not widespread, potentially gender-biased views appeared to be more prevalent among Firefighters, Police Officers, and men. According to an index calculated from across four statements related to general attitudes towards gender, scores among Firefighters (2.7) and Police Officers (2.4) were significantly greater than average, while the score among men (2.5) was significantly higher than among women (2.1).
- Further to this, when asked about the extent to which racism has been discussed in Britain over the last year, overall more than one in four (27%) felt it has been discussed too much, with this opinion more widely held among Frontline Police staff (32%), men (33%) and those aged 55 and over (34%).

2.3 Workplace Guidance and Training

- Most were aware of their organisation offering guidance on various inclusion and diversity matters, with half or more saying they have read guidance relating to the five items tested.
- Around three in four (73%) were aware of their organisation offering specific training on equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace, with more than half (57%) saying they have attended this. However, awareness and attendance at training on other matters was much lower.

- Of those who have attended each type of training tested, most were satisfied, with around seven in ten saying this. No more than 9% were dissatisfied with the training provided – with the highest level of dissatisfaction being recorded for that on ‘equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace’ training - the mostly widely attended of all. Dissatisfaction with this training was higher among Fire and Rescue Service employees (23%) – notably Firefighters (28%) – compared with other groups.

In the qualitative research, participants who had experienced or witnessed gender-based discrimination in the workplace felt that the current training is not sufficient. They described it as tick-box and thought that people do not take online training seriously. In order to have more impact, the training should cover a wider range of issues, examples that demonstrate the impact of discrimination and should support people to challenge behaviour they observe in others.

2.4 Experiences of Discriminatory Behaviours

- More than half of employees (53%) had either experienced or seen discriminatory behaviours in the workplace in the last 12 months. 44% had experienced such behaviours, while 40% had witnessed them. In around two-thirds of cases, these took place across more than one incident.
- There were not many differences between demographic groups. Notably, women were neither more nor less likely than men to have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviours overall. Employees aged 35-44 (61%) and those who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual (66%) were more likely to report having experienced or seen any of the behaviours, while those aged 55+ (37%) were less likely to report having done so.

In the qualitative research, some participants talked about men with ‘a reputation’ for being difficult to work with. While they would find it reassuring to hear they were not the only person to have a problem with that individual, they were frustrated that action was not taken against these ‘repeat offenders’.

- The most common behaviours experienced or seen were related to respect for others, with the three most widely cited behaviours being: colleagues acting if they are better than you/another colleague (40%); colleagues treating you/them with less respect (37%); and colleagues treating you/them with less courtesy (35%). Other behaviours were less frequent, but still present. More than one in six (18%) had experienced or witnessed inappropriate remarks being made, with one in ten (10%) experiencing or witnessing colleagues using names, slurs or insults aimed at them/others. Three percent of staff had experienced or witnessed threatening behaviour or harassment, with one percent experiencing or witnessing inappropriate touching.
- There is a culture of not reporting workplace discrimination. In most cases those who experienced or witnessed discrimination did not make a complaint, with formal complaints being especially rare. Only around a quarter report having made one or more complaints. Of those who have experienced discriminatory behaviours, 5% reported making a formal complaint and 21% an informal complaint; of those who have witnessed discriminatory behaviours, 3% reported making a formal complaint and 23% an informal complaint.

Based on the qualitative research, reasons for not reporting are complex but typically are driven by a lack of confidence in the process (that anything will change, that they will be taken seriously), concern about the personal cost (being branded a ‘trouble-maker’ or ‘difficult’ and the impact on

their career), and concerns about lack of evidence. Also, in isolation, they describe many of the incidents as 'quite minor', while the cumulative impact is more significant. As such, while an individual incident might not justify a complaint, there does not appear to be a way to collect examples to identify concerning patterns.

- Reported awareness of complaint procedures is high (overall 91% were aware), though many lack full details of these, with 43% fully aware. Two-thirds (68%) were confident their organisation would deal with a complaint in an appropriate manner, though a quarter (26%) were not confident.

Within the qualitative research, people are aware that previous complaints have not ended well for the complainant. This might explain why people who said they were more familiar with the process were also less confident in it.

- Most people responsible for discriminatory behaviours were in similar or senior roles to the person subject to them.
- Gender-based discrimination (23%) was the second most common form experienced or seen, behind discrimination based around work-related reasons (27%). Age-based discrimination (17%) was the third most frequent type experienced or witnessed. Discrimination based around other demographic characteristics was less frequent, though still present, with one in ten (10%) reporting or witnessing behaviours that targeted someone's education level, 9% someone's physical appearance, 8% an aspect of someone's mental health and 6% saying behaviours were targeted towards someone's disability or ethnicity. Discrimination based around certain of these characteristics might be expected to be less common due to the fact a minority of staff belong to certain groups. Just over one in five (22%) said the behaviours experienced or seen did not target any particular characteristics.

2.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, we have the following recommendations:

- Acknowledge where there are issues and address them head on: make it clear that the culture is changing and that discriminatory behaviours will not be tolerated.
- Leadership must walk the walk: senior leaders must do more to show that they are fully committed to eliminating discriminatory behaviour in the workplace, starting by thinking about their own language and behaviours and how these could be interpreted.
- Ensure that people who report discriminatory behaviour feel supported not blamed: ensure they feel confident to come forward and can see the value in doing so.
- Improve training: make sure everyone attends and takes it seriously. Make sure it is engaging and not a tick-box exercise.
- Build on progress to date: in the qualitative research many participants comment that things used to be worse. There is a long journey ahead, but people are already noticing changes and appreciate the work being done.

3 Workplace Environment – Workplace Culture

This chapter provides an overview of how employees view the overall workplace culture within their organisation. Questions covered the following broad themes: the workplace and management, job satisfaction and opportunities, and perceptions of fairness.

Overall, two thirds (66%) of employees who completed the survey described the culture as at least fairly positive. However, the survey demonstrated that there are some issues relating to the overall workplace culture. However, these issues are not consistent across all organisations, with dissatisfaction more prevalent among Fire and Rescue employees, Police Officers and men (rather than women).

When it came to questions relating to the workplace and management, although most agreed that the culture at their organisation was positive, this sentiment was weaker among those working for the Fire and Rescue Service (56%) and Police Officers (57%). Most employees thought they have a supportive management, that their employer is open to making changes to improve the culture, and that their employer would support them if they raised concerns about a colleague's behaviour or attitudes. Again though, negative sentiment was stronger among Police Officers and Firefighters.

When it came to job satisfaction and opportunities, overall around four-fifths (79%) said they would likely choose to be employed by their organisation in two years' time. A similar proportion agreed they have a worthwhile job that makes a difference. However, positive sentiment was weaker on other measures related to this theme, including around whether a culture of unnecessary competition exists, that their workplace is somewhere they can be themselves and that employees have the opportunity to develop their potential.

A sizeable minority of employees had encountered negative experiences linked to workplace opportunities, including not seeking new professional responsibilities for fear of not having enough time to do everything (32% ever experienced) and feeling as though they lack the skills and ability to take on a position of responsibility (25% ever experienced).

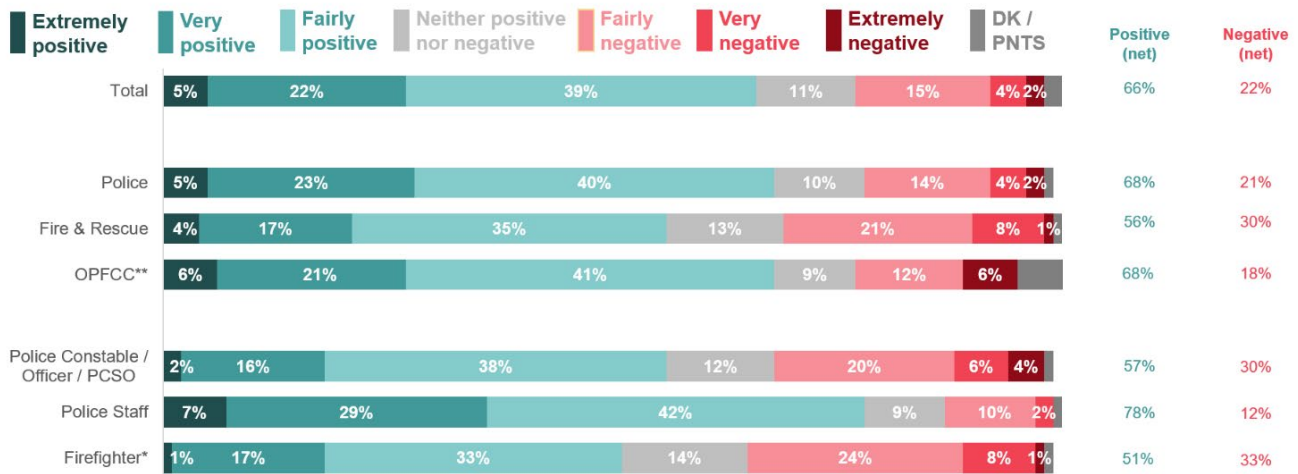
When it came to perceptions of fairness, seven in ten (71%) felt comfortable speaking up about issues when they arise. However, fewer felt that their voice is listened to and respected (57%), and that they are fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities (53%). Opinion was more divided over whether people felt they had to work harder than others in similar roles, while a third (35%) thought they had experienced someone with less experience or fewer qualifications getting promoted before them. As with the other sections analysed in this chapter, negative sentiment was more widespread among Police Officers and Fire and Rescue Service employees.

3.1 The workplace and management

Overall attitudes towards the workplace culture were generally positive across all three organisations. Around a quarter (23%) said they would speak highly about their organisation without being asked, with overall around two-thirds (64%) saying they would speak highly. In contrast, one in six (18%) overall said they would speak critically. Furthermore, two-thirds (66%) felt that the overall culture at their organisation was positive. For these two questions, the biggest differences related to role within the organisation as negative opinions were more prevalent among Firefighters and Police Officers.

Figure 3.1.1: Taking everything into account, how positive or negative would you say the overall culture is at your organisation?

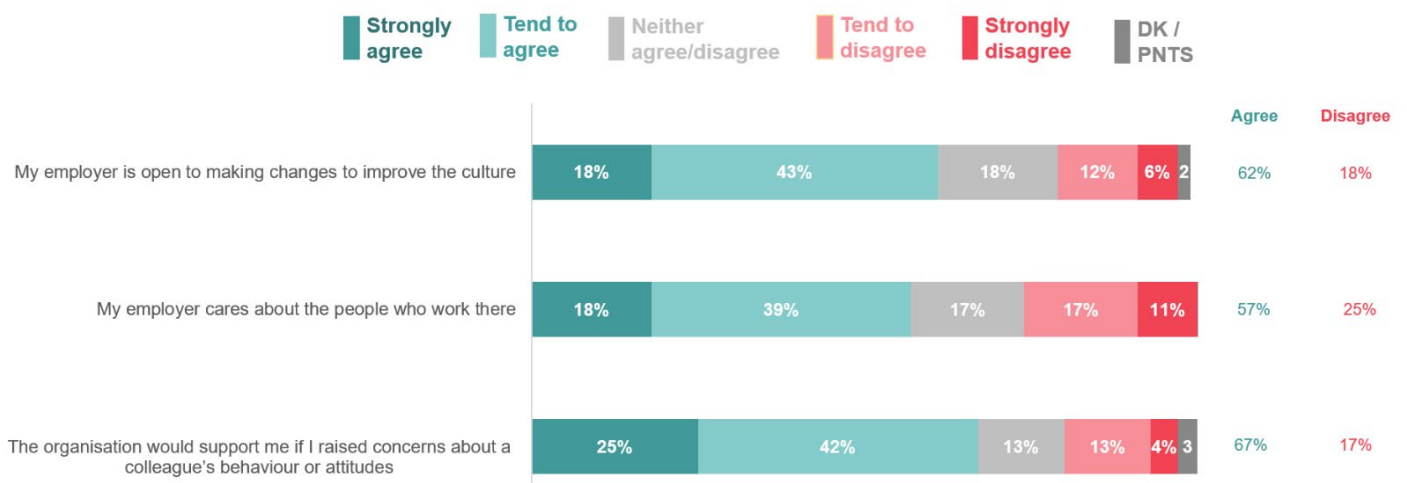
Base: All employees (920)



On more specific matters related to the workplace and management, across all organisations, around two-thirds (67%) agreed that their organisation would support them if they raised concerns about a colleague’s behaviour or attitudes. Slightly lower proportions agreed that their employer is open to making changes to improve the culture (62%) and that their employer cares about the people who work there (57%). Nevertheless, a sizeable minority responded negatively to these statements. One in four felt their employer does not care about the people who work there (25%) with one in six (18%) of the view that their employer is not open to making changes to improve the culture, and a similar proportion (17%) saying their organisation would not support them if they raised concerns about a colleague’s behaviour or attitudes.

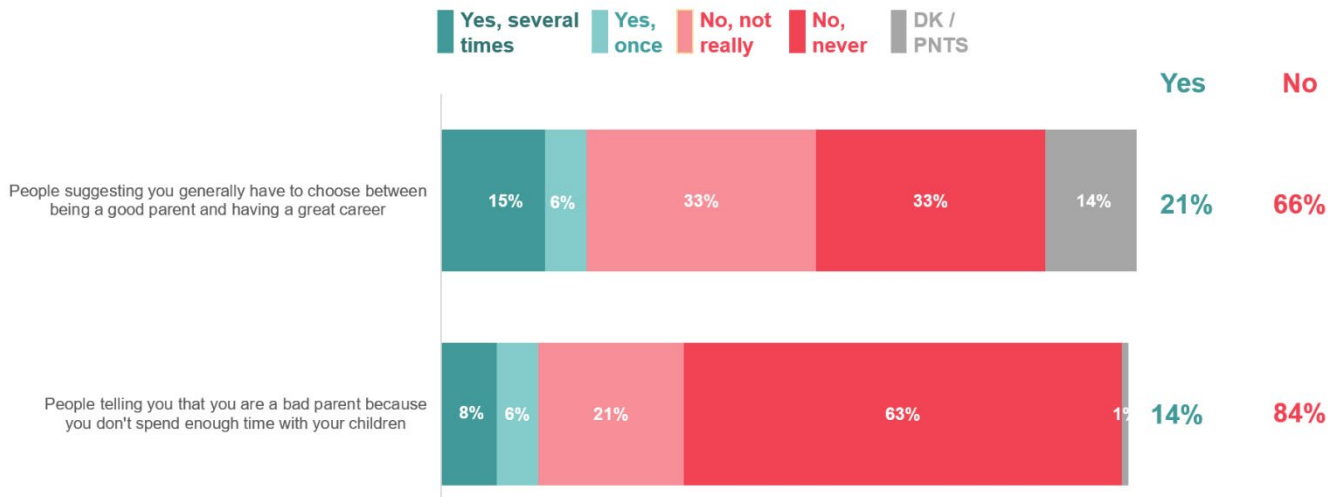
Figure 3.1.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: All employees (920)



When asked about negative experiences linked to the theme of the workplace and management, one in five (21%) said they have encountered people suggesting you generally have to choose between being a good parent and having a greater career and 14% of parents reported having had people tell them they're a bad parent because they don't spend enough time with their children.¹³

Figure 3.1.3: Have you encountered the following situations in your current workplace?



Base: All employees (920); for statement: People telling you that you are a bad parent because you don't spend enough time with your children - All parents for who statement applies (402)

Qualitative deep dive: overall culture

The qualitative interviews were recruited to focus on people who had experienced or witnessed gender-based discrimination in the workplace. Nonetheless, nearly all participants had positive things to say about their workplace including their ability to make a difference through their role and how every day can be different. People often spoke about a supportive immediate team, even if they experienced issues elsewhere. Most were also keen to explain that while the interview by definition focussed on the negatives, most had good working relationships with their colleagues and enjoyed their job for the most part.

The less good things included heavy workloads (which could be exacerbated by staff turnover), lack of recognition for work done well and resistance to change. In some parts of the organisations people described an overly hierarchical and 'old fashioned' workplace culture – particularly in the Fire and Rescue Service - which could contribute to a less good working environment. Those that worked across the three organisations often described the Police as being more professional than the Fire and Rescue Service. While they thought that the Police service had been on a long journey to improve the culture, they felt that Fire were currently further behind. The OFPCC participants described their own organisation as mostly respectful and supportive, and typically when they experienced/witnessed discrimination it was in their interactions with the other services which made it harder for them to address.

¹³ The latter figure represents the percentage among parents reporting that the statement applied to them.

As noted above, there were some differences by organisation:

- Fire and Rescue employees were more likely to view their overall workplace culture as negative (30%).
- In addition, Fire and Rescue Service employees were more likely to feel that their employer does not care about the people who work there (33% disagreed) and to not think their organisation would support them if they raised concern about a colleague's behaviour or attitudes (26% disagreed).
- Police employees (22% ever experienced) were more likely than Fire and Rescue Service (15%) and OPFCC employees (6%) to have encountered people suggesting you generally have to choose between being a good parent and having a good career.
- OPFCC employees (85%) were more likely to say they would speak positively about their organisation.

Responses also varied according to role:

- Police Officers (30%) and Firefighters (33%) were more likely to say the overall culture was negative, whereas Police staff were far less likely to think the culture was negative (among this group, 12% said the culture was negative and 78% that it was positive).
- Police Officers were also less likely to feel that their employer is open to making changes to improve the culture (55% agreed it is open to making changes), compared with Police Staff (71% agreed). Police Staff (71%) were then more likely than Officers (55%) to agree with this statement.
- Nearly four-fifths (77%) of Police Staff said they would speak highly about working for their organisation. However, this sentiment was weaker among Police Officers (48%), with more than one in four of this group (28%) saying they would speak critically.
- Firefighters were more likely than Fire and Rescue Service Staff, to think their employer does not care about the people who work there (40% and 22% respectively disagreed that their employer cares).
- When asked about workplace experiences, Police Officers (31%) and Firefighters (20%) were more likely than other staff in their organisations to have encountered people suggesting you generally have to choose between being a good parent and having a great career.

When asked about negative experiences related to the workplace and management, responses differed according to responsibility:

- Those with line management or leadership responsibilities (27%) were more likely than those without (16%) to have experienced people suggesting you generally have to choose between being a good parent and having a great career.
- Parents with leadership/line management responsibilities who said the statement applied to them were more likely to have had people tell them they are a bad parent because they don't spend enough time with their children (18%)

There were also some demographic differences:

- Women held more positive views compared with men, as they were more likely to say they would speak highly of their organisation (71% compared with 58% of men) and to say the overall culture was positive (70% compared with 64% of men). This was further reflected in more specific statements, as women (65% agreed) were more likely than men (49% agreed) to think their employer cares about the people who work there.
- Negative sentiment was stronger among ethnic minority employees compared with those who are white, and those with a disability compared with those without. LGBT+ employees were also more likely than average to say they would speak critically of their organisation (28%).
- Employees who have been with the organisation for less than 2 years were more likely to say they would speak highly about working for their organisation (82%) and that the overall culture is positive (83%). Negative sentiment was stronger among those who have been with their organisation for longer.
- Those aged 55+ (75%) were more likely than average to agree that their employer is open to making changes and that their employer cares about the people who work there (71%). This was also the case among those with the organisation for two years or less.
- Those aged 35-44 (38%), who are employed part-time (29%) and who are parents (33%) were more likely to have encountered people suggesting you generally have to choose between being a good parent and having a great career.

Qualitative deep dive: The role of leadership

Nearly all participants in the qualitative interviews thought that the leadership have a vital role in setting the organisational culture – especially in such a hierarchical environment. In the Police, most thought that the leadership were leading by example and although there is more to do, the direction of travel was positive and they could see the culture changing. In contrast, some described the Fire and Rescue Service as going backwards more recently, with older and more senior men appearing reluctant to take issues seriously or admit there might be a problem. While gender-based discrimination was less commonly identified as occurring within the OFPCC, those in OFPCC roles noted that they did not always feel supported by senior leadership when seeking to challenge behaviour in the Fire and Rescue Service.

3.2 Job satisfaction and opportunities

Overall, around four in five (79%) said they are likely to still choose to be employed by their organisation in two years' time, with 13% saying they are unlikely to. Positive sentiment was stronger among Police Staff (82%) compared with Police Officers (76%), with 17% of Officers saying they are unlikely to choose to be employed by the Police within this timeframe.

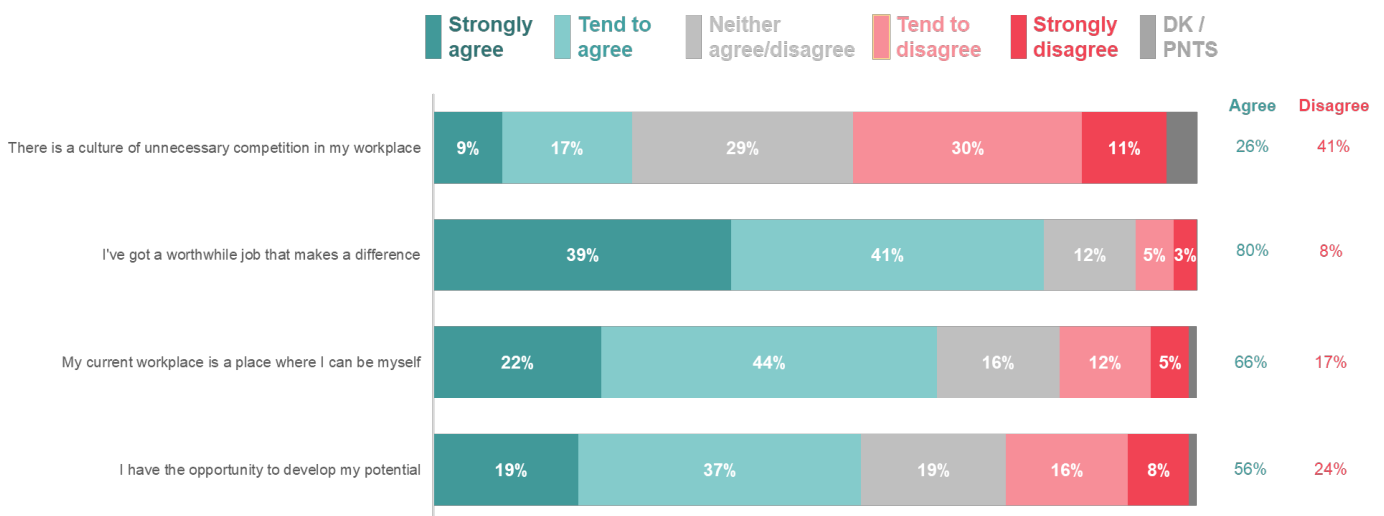
Figure 3.2.1: How likely, if at all, is it that you will still choose to be employed by your organisation in two years' time?



Base: All employees (920)

Across all organisations, people generally felt that they have a worthwhile job that makes a difference (80% agreed), though fewer people thought that their current workplace is a place where they can be themselves (66% agreed) and that they have the opportunity to develop their potential (56%). Further to this, a quarter (26%) agreed that there is a culture of unnecessary competition in their workplace, with two-fifths (41%) disagreeing.

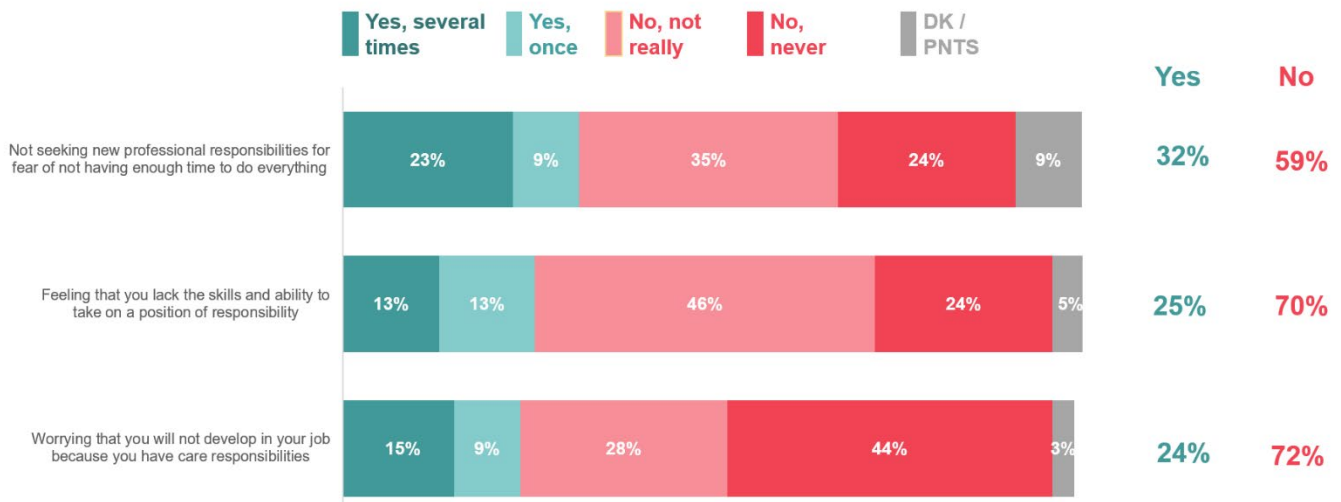
Figure 3.2.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace?



Base: All employees (920)

When asked about specific negative experiences related to job satisfaction and opportunities, people were most likely to have not sought new professional responsibilities due to concerns about having enough time to do everything (32%). One in four said they had ever felt they lack the skills and ability to take on a position of responsibility (25%) and a similar proportion worried that they will not develop in their job because they have care responsibilities (20%).¹⁴

Figure 3.2.3: Have you encountered the following situations in your current workplace?



Base: All employees (920); for statement 'Worrying that you will not develop in your job because you have care responsibilities': All staff for who statement applies (754)

Qualitative deep dive: "Jobs for the boys"

In both the Fire and Rescue Service and Police, there were examples of times where people had applied for a job but did not think it was a fair competition. For example, they had heard rumours that a particular person was going to get the role before they applied. In these examples the other candidates failed the paper sift and therefore no interviews were held. People suggested the process would feel fairer if there was an interview, especially when the results of the paper sift were close. In the examples given the successful candidate was male, while unsuccessful candidates were both male and female. The suggestion was not that the job went to a person because he was a man, but rather that he got the job because of his relationship with the hiring manager.

For these questions, there were only minor differences when analysed according to organisation. However, there were significant differences according to role:

- When asked how likely they'd still choose to be employed by their organisation in two years' time, Police Staff (82%) were more likely than Officers (76%) to say they would be. 17% of Officers said they were unlikely to be employed by their organisation in two years' time compared to 10% of Police Staff.

¹⁴ The latter figure represents the percentage among those reporting that the statement applied to them.

- Police Staff (73%) were more likely to agree that they can be themselves at work, but this view was less commonly held among Police Officers and Firefighters, among whom 23% and 25% disagreed, respectively. Police Officers were also more likely to agree that there is a culture of unnecessary competition in the workplace (37%) and again, Police Staff (46%) were more likely to disagree.
- Police Officers and Firefighters were also more likely than other staff in their organisations to have not sought new professional responsibilities for fear of not having enough time to do everything (43% of Police Officers, 35% of Firefighters).
- Police Officers (33% of those to whom the statement applied) were also more likely to worry that they won't be able to develop in their job because of their care responsibilities.

Further, there were some differences according to responsibilities:

- Those with leadership/line management responsibilities (30% agreed) were more likely to feel that there is a culture of unnecessary competition in the workplace when compared with those without such responsibilities (22% agreed). They were also more likely than those without to have not sought new professional responsibilities for fear of not having enough time to do everything (39%).
- Despite saying this, those with leadership/line management responsibilities were more likely than average to feel that they have a worthwhile job that makes a difference (84% agreed).

When analysed according to demographic criteria:

- Employees who have been with the organisation for less than 2 years were more likely to say that they are certain/likely to be employed by their organisation in two years' time (88%), in comparison to staff who have been with the organisation for 10 years or more, where 16% said it's unlikely.
- Compared with men, women were more likely to feel that their current workplace is a place where they can be themselves (73% agreed compared with 62% of men).
- Although the base size is small, ethnic minority employees were more likely to think their workplace is not a place where they can be themselves (33% disagreed) and that they do not have the opportunity to develop their potential (38% disagreed). Similarly, employees with a disability or long-term health condition were more likely than those without to disagree that their current workplace is a place they can be themselves (26% disagreed), that they have the opportunity to develop their potential (32% disagreed) and that they've got a worthwhile job that makes a difference (12% disagreed).
- Those with a disability (32% agreed) were more likely than those without (23% agreed) to think that there is a culture of unnecessary competition in their workplace.
- Younger employees (35% of those aged up to 44) and who have been with their organisation for two to five years (36%) were more likely to have ever felt they lack the skills and ability to take on a position of responsibility.
- Those aged 35-44 (51%), who are employed part-time (47%) and who are parents (47%) were more likely to report having not sought new professional responsibilities for fear of not having enough time to do everything.

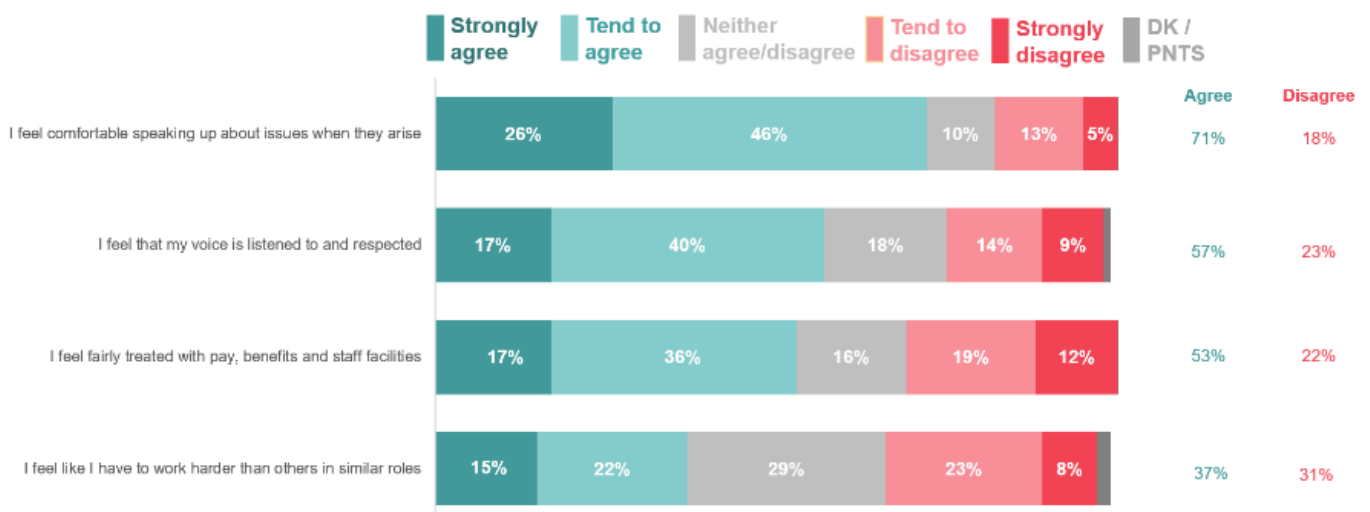
- Among those who said the statement applied to them, women (29%), part-time employees (33%), parents (31%), and those who have a disability (33%) were more likely to worry that they won't be able to develop in their job because of their care responsibilities.

3.3 Perceptions of fairness

To understand employees' perception of fairness in the workplace, the survey included questions on individual experiences related to the general workplace culture in their organisation.

Overall, while seven in ten (71% agreed) felt comfortable speaking up about issues when they arise, fewer felt that their voice is listened to and respected (57% agreed), or that they are fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities (53%). Opinion was then largely split among employees when asked whether they felt they had to work harder than others in similar roles, with 37% agreeing and 31% disagreeing. Further to this, around a third (35%) mentioned they had ever experienced someone with less experience or fewer qualifications getting promoted before them – with a quarter (24%) having experienced this several times.

Figure 3.3.1: Thinking about your current workplace, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All employees (920)

Qualitative deep dive: positive discrimination

Some of the qualitative participants described incidents where they believed positive discrimination may have occurred in the Police service (i.e. giving an advantage to candidates with protected characteristics). However, similar incidents were described in different ways by different participants, and it is possible that some examples were based on rumours rather than facts. The reality is that several women described being told by colleagues they were a 'diversity hire' rather than getting the job on their own merits, which they found hurtful and believed to be untrue. Being constantly told this could undermine their self-confidence. People were not aware of any positive discrimination policy and wanted transparency in the recruitment and promotions process. Women were asking for a level playing field so they could show they got a job on their own merits. One man noted that he had heard a woman say that she was more likely to get a job due to her gender and sexuality, and reflected that if he had said something similar (i.e. that he was a straight man so would get the job) that could have been grounds for a complaint.

None of the Fire and Rescue Service interviews mentioned positive discrimination, except to note that currently it could be a difficult and potentially uncomfortable culture for a woman to join. Consequently, participants suggested more work needed to be done to improve the culture, before seeking to hire more diversity into the team.

For many statements, there were significant differences in attitudes based on which organisation they worked for, their role and demographics. Again, Police Officers and Firefighters were more likely to disagree with these statements, suggesting that these groups feel more disaffected. These findings correlate with those presented in Section 3.1 and 3.2 There was also greater dissatisfaction among men and those with a disability or from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Qualitative deep dive: lack of professional respect

Some of the descriptions of the Fire and Rescue Service suggested that it is not uncommon for women to feel systematically undermined when giving their professional input. The culture was described as closed, secretive, defensive and exclusionary by some of the participants. There was a perception that if a senior person was given advice they did not want to hear, they would seek to circumvent the advisor rather than working through the issues to find a solution. Although some had heard talk of changes, they felt that people still thought they could 'get away with' these behaviours which were a significant cause of frustration. Some suggested this lack of respect could be exacerbated by the limited number of women currently in senior roles and that this may not change while older white men prefer to hire and promote people who are similar to them.

When analysed according to organisation:

- Across all organisations, Police employees were more likely to have a positive response to these statements, whereas Fire and Rescue Service employees were more likely to disagree with the statements. Notably, Fire and Rescue Service employees were more likely than average to disagree that they feel their voice is listened to and respected (30% disagree) and that they feel fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities (41% disagree).
- Police (35%) and Fire and Rescue Service (39%) employees were more likely to have experienced someone with less experience or fewer qualifications getting promoted before them compared with OPFCC employees (12%).

Opinions differed according to role, especially in the Police:

- Police Officers (29%) were more likely than Police Staff (16%) to disagree that their voice is listened to and respected. Two-thirds of Police Staff (66%) agreed with this statement, compared to half of Officers.
- Police Staff (59%) were more likely to agree that they are fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities, with Police Officers (36%) more likely to disagree.
- Compared with Police Staff (33% agreed), Police Officers were more likely to feel they have to work harder than others in similar roles (42% agreed).
- Nearly half of Police Officers (49%) said they have encountered someone with less experience or fewer qualifications getting promoted before them, compared with 24% of Police Staff. Within the Fire

and Rescue Service, Firefighters (46%) were more likely than Other Staff (29%) to say they have encountered this.

- Other Fire and Rescue Service Staff were more likely than Firefighters to not feel fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities (51% disagreed they were treated fairly compared with 36% of Firefighters who disagreed).

When analysed according to responsibilities:

- Those with line management or leadership responsibilities were more likely to feel that they have to work harder than others in similar roles (42% agreed). They were also more likely than those without responsibilities to say they have encountered someone with less experience or fewer qualifications getting promoted before them (45%).

When analysed according to demographic criteria:

- Compared with men, women were more likely to feel their voice is listened to and respected (63% agreed compared with 52% of men) and that they feel fairly treated with pay, benefits and staff facilities (59% agreed compared with 47% of men).
- Employees with a disability or long-term health condition were more likely than those without to disagree that their voice is listened to and respected (29%) and that they feel comfortable speaking up about issues when they arise (23% disagreed). They also felt that they have to work harder than others in similar roles (44% agreed).
- Men (41%), those aged 35-44 (47%), who have been employed for ten or more years (48%) and who are parents (42%) were more likely to have encountered someone with less experience or fewer qualifications get promoted before them.

4 Workplace Environment – Inclusion and Diversity

As well as questions assessing opinions of the workplace culture across the three organisations in general, the research investigated attitudes towards inclusion and diversity across the organisations, which this chapter focuses on.

The survey included questions on: whether employees members thought their organisation is an inclusive environment and has a diverse workforce; awareness of training and guidance on inclusion and diversity matters; satisfaction with training on inclusion and diversity matters (among those who have participated); and the equal treatment of employees. These topics were all covered in the depth interviews with those who have experienced or witnessed gender discrimination. The survey then also included questions on general attitudes towards gender and race.

Overall, majorities across the three organisations felt their organisation is an inclusive environment. However, only among Police employees did a majority think their organisation has a diverse workforce. As well as being less likely than Police employees to think their workplace is an inclusive environment and that it has a diverse workforce, greater proportions of Fire and Rescue Service employees (though still minorities) thought that people are not treated equally at work regardless of various characteristics. This included three in ten (31%) who held the view that staff in the Fire and Rescue Service are not treated equally according to gender. The survey also identified a greater prevalence of misogynistic attitudes among Fire and Rescue Service employees.

As well as there being differences according to organisation and role, perceptions of the treatment of various groups differed between demographic groups. Demographic criteria rather than organisation or role was most likely to in explain differences in opinion regarding whether men and women are treated equally in relation to workplace issues such as pay, benefits and promotions.

In order to improve inclusion and diversity, it would seem two possible areas to address are guidance and training on I&D matters. Levels of awareness of workplace guidance on the various I&D matters tested were high, with half or more overall reporting they have read these. However, awareness and readership levels were weaker among people who do not have leadership or line management responsibilities. Awareness of and participation in training on I&D matters were weaker still. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that training on I&D matters has been well received, with around seven in ten who report they have participated in each type of training satisfied with it. However, in the qualitative research, those who had experienced gender-based discrimination were concerned that the training was not doing the job it was intended to.

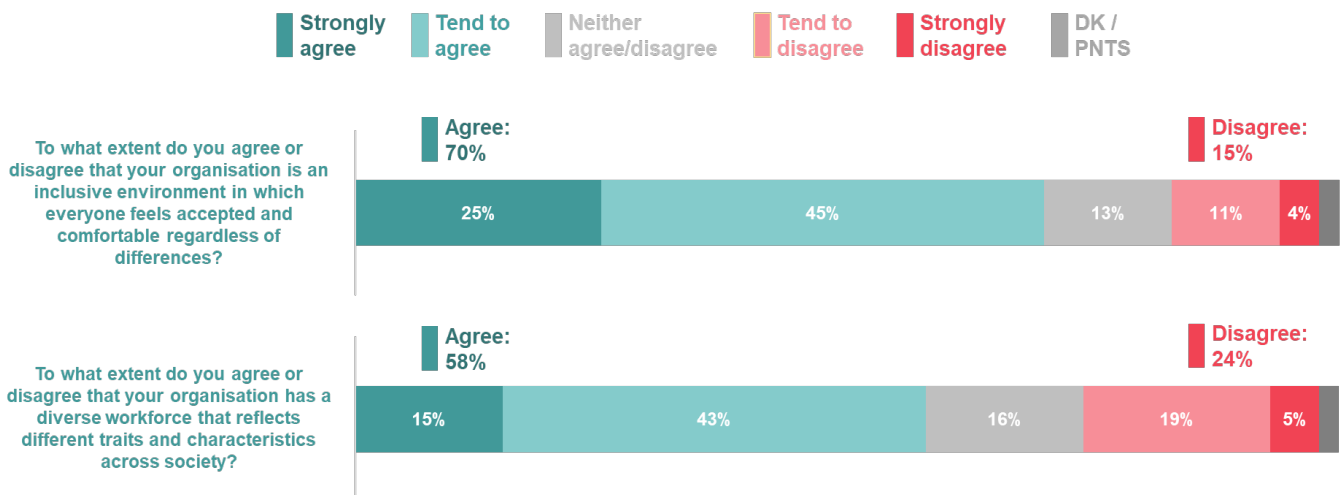
4.1 Inclusive and Diverse Environment

Fewer employees felt that their organisation has a diverse workforce than said it is an inclusive environment, with this being most pronounced within the Fire and Rescue Service and OPFCC.

Overall, across the three organisations 70% agreed and 15% disagreed that their organisation 'is an inclusive environment in which everyone feels accepted and comfortable regardless of differences'. In contrast, 58% agreed and a quarter (24%) disagreed that their organisation 'has a diverse workforce that reflects diverse traits and characteristics across society'. It is important to note though that positive

sentiment was often qualified, with 45% saying they ‘tend to agree’ their organisation is an inclusive environment and 43% tending to agree their organisation has a diverse workforce.

Figure 4.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree that: your organisation is an inclusive environment in which everyone feels accepted and comfortable regardless of differences / your organisation has a diverse workforce that reflects different traits and characteristics across society?



Base: All employees (920)

There were significant differences between organisations. Police employees (73%) were more likely to say that their organisation is an inclusive environment. In contrast, a significantly lower proportion of Fire and Rescue Service employees (55%) held this view, with a quarter (26%) disagreeing. Only among Police employees did a majority (62%) agree that their organisation has a diverse workforce. In contrast, Fire and Rescue Service employees were as likely to disagree (38%) as they were to agree (38%) with this statement. Meanwhile, within the OPFCC around half (53%) disagreed and a third (32%) agreed that their organisation has a diverse workforce.¹⁵

Qualitative deep dive: the relationship between diversity and inclusion

Within the Police, some participants described a concerted effort to recruit people from more diverse backgrounds, and in turn they felt this had helped add momentum to the efforts to develop a more inclusive environment (although noting there is more work to do). They also talked about a greater commitment to being open and talking about differences. Perhaps as a result, the volume of inappropriate ‘banter’ has dropped considerably and most recent examples of gender-based discrimination happened in one-on-one settings. However, micro-aggressions and more subtle issues were still considered to be widespread by some participants. Similarly, there are potentially pockets where gender-based discrimination is perceived to be more likely to occur – specifically the ‘hyper-masculine’ teams where there are still very few women.

The Fire and Rescue Service is perceived to be behind on this issue – not necessarily appearing to make the same effort to recruit diverse candidates and not creating an inclusive environment for

¹⁵ Given the size of the OPFCC organisation, perceptions that their organisation does not have a diverse workforce are perhaps less of an issue than for the Fire and Rescue Service.

them when they join. Some suggest that the Fire and Rescue Service might be paying ‘lip service’ to diversity and inclusion – knowing what to say but not necessarily following through.

While the Police scored more positively on both measures, particularly when compared with the Fire and Rescue Service, perceptions of the diversity of the workforce differed between Police Officers and Police Staff, with Officers less inclined to feel the organisation has a diverse workforce (56% agree and 24% disagree) compared with Staff (68% agree and 16% disagree).

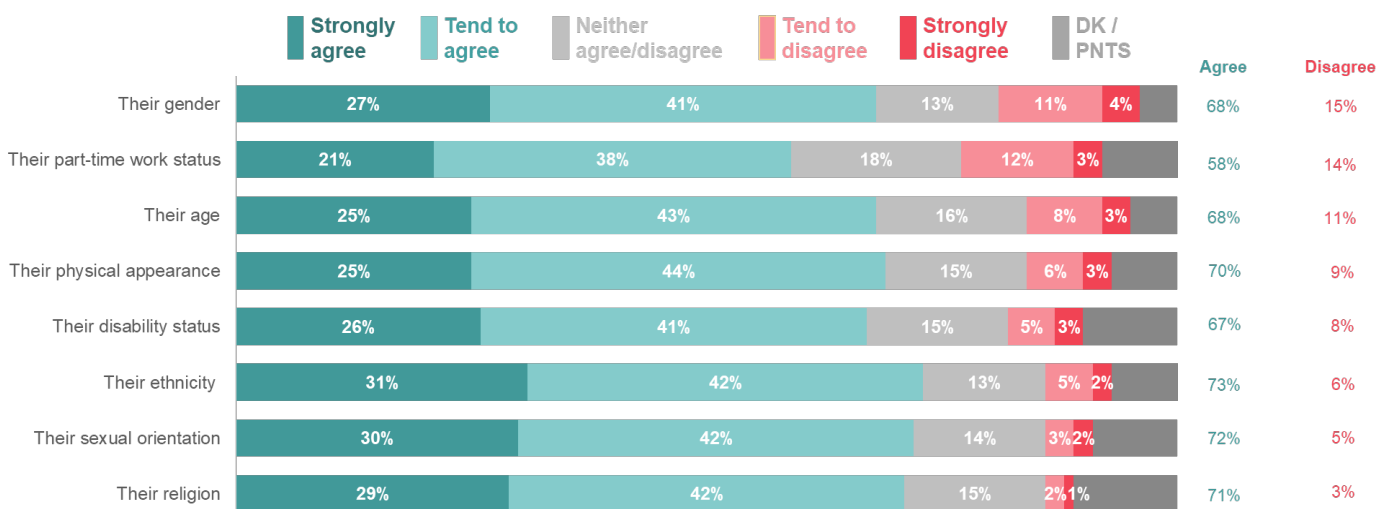
There were also differences between people who did and did not have managerial or leadership responsibilities. Those reporting that they have neither line management nor leadership responsibilities were more likely to feel their organisation is an inclusive environment (75%) and has a diverse workforce (63% agree) compared with those with such responsibilities.

When analysed according to demographic criteria, those belonging to minoritized groups were less likely to feel that their organisation is an inclusive environment or has a diverse workforce. Although base sizes are small, there were significant differences for both statements between white and ethnic minority members of staff. There were also significant differences between employees with a disability and those who do not have a disability when it comes to thinking their organisation has an inclusive environment. Parents (28% disagree) were also more likely to think that their organisation does not have a diverse workforce. For these statements, there were no significant differences between men and women.

4.2 Equal treatment

These generally positive views about inclusion and diversity are then reflected further in reflections on whether people are treated equally in the workplace regardless of various characteristics, as across organisations most people believed employees are treated fairly. However, they were more likely to say this is not the case when it comes to gender (15% disagreed) and employees’ part-time status (14% disagreed). This indicates that there may be some underlying issues related to gender- and role-based discrimination in the workplace.¹⁶ One in 9 (11% disagreed) also felt that not everyone is treated fairly regardless of their age.

Figure 4.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree that everyone working at your organisation is treated fairly, regardless of each of the following?



¹⁶ As the subsequent chapter on individual experiences will show, workplace role and gender correspond with the two most frequent characteristics that discriminatory behaviours experienced and seen were aimed towards.

Base: All employees (920)

4.2.2 Equal treatment according to gender

There was a stronger sense that people are not treated equally according to their gender within the Fire and Rescue Service, where 3 in 10 (31%) disagreed, compared with Police (12%) and OPFCC (12%) employees. Within the Fire and Rescue Service opinion appeared to be similar across roles, with Firefighters (31%) as likely as Fire and Rescue Service Staff (33%) to not feel that everyone is treated equally regardless of their gender. Across the organisations, those with leadership or line management responsibilities were also more likely to feel that there is an issue regarding unequal treatment according to gender (20% disagreed).

There were no significant differences between men and women when it came to perceptions of whether people are treated equally regardless of their gender. Some demographic differences were apparent though, with employees aged 35-44 (21%), those who have been with their organisation for 5-10 years (21%) and those who identify as belonging to an ethnic minority group (33%) more likely than average to disagree.

4.2.3 Equal treatment according to other characteristics

These organisational, role-based and demographic differences were not unique to equal treatment according to gender, and similar differences were identified relating to equal treatment for people with other characteristics.

When analysing the data according to organisation:

- Fire and Rescue Service employees were also more likely than average to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their physical appearance (15%), sexual orientation (12%) and ethnicity (11%).

When analysed according to role:

- Firefighters were more likely than average to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their age (19%), physical appearance (20%) and ethnicity (12%).
- Police Officers were more likely than average to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their age (15%) and disability status (11%).

There were also further differences according to responsibilities:

- Those with line management or leadership responsibilities were more likely than average to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their part-time work status (18%) and ethnicity (9%).

When analysed according to demographic criteria, there were some differences according to age, as well as ethnicity and disability status:

- Those aged 35-44 were more likely to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their part-time work status (24%), physical appearance (13%), ethnicity (11%), sexual orientation (7%) and religion (5%).

- Ethnic minority employees were more likely to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their ethnicity (40%), physical appearance (25%), disability status (18%), sexual orientation (13%) and religion (13%).
- Employees with a disability were more likely to disagree that everyone is treated equally regardless of their part-time work status (20%), age (18%), disability status (16%) and physical appearance (13%).

These data demonstrate that employees believe some people are being treated differently, particularly among Fire and Rescue Service employees and Police Officers, and that, where such issues exist, they extend beyond gender. The fact that staff belonging to minoritized groups are more likely to feel people are not treated equally further reaffirms this.

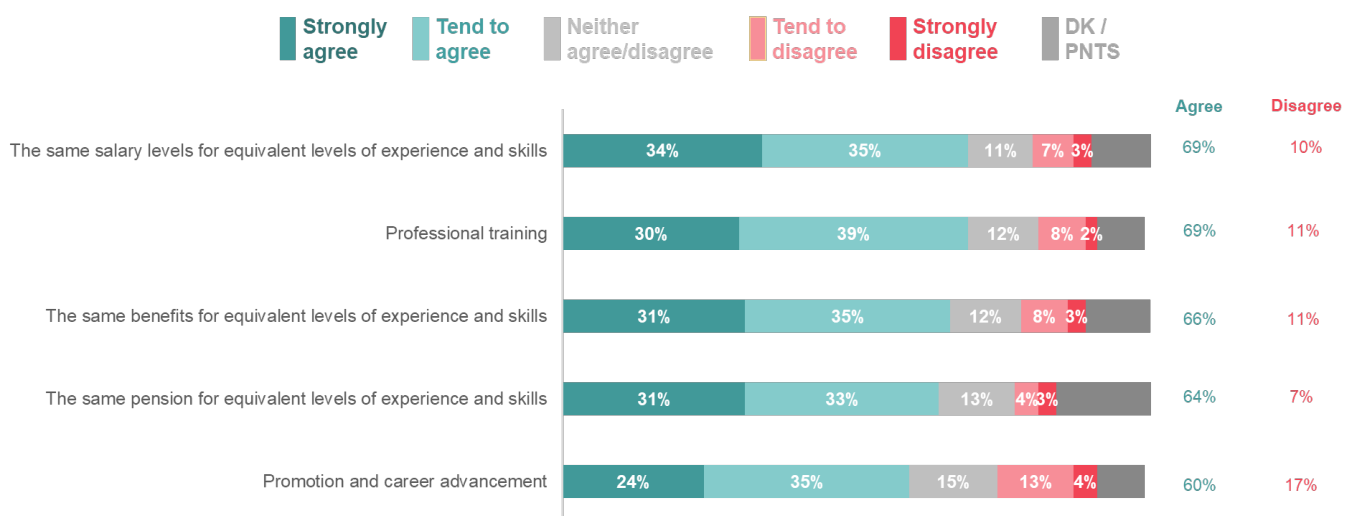
4.2.4 Equal treatment of men and women in the workplace

As seen above, roughly two-thirds felt that staff are treated equally regardless of their gender. Similar proportions felt that men and women have equal access to:

- The same salary levels for equivalent levels of experience and skills (69% agree, 10% disagree);
- Professional training (69% agree, 11% disagree);
- The same benefits for equivalent levels of experience and skills (66% agree, 11% disagree); and
- The same pension for equivalent levels of experience and skills (64% agree; 7% disagree).

However, there was a sense that men and women may not have equal access to promotion and career advancement; while 60% agreed with this statement, one in six (17%) disagreed.

Figure 4.3: To what extent do you agree or disagree that men and women in your workplace have equal access to the following?



Base: All employees (920)

When it came to the equal treatment of men and women in relation to workplace matters, there were significant differences in sentiment between men and women. Compared with women, men were more likely to agree with all statements. Women were then more likely to feel they did not have equal access to:

- Professional training (13% disagreed compared with 6% of men);
- The same salary levels for equivalent experience and skills (14% disagreed compared with 5% of men); and
- The same benefits for equivalent experience and skills (13% disagreed compared with 7% of men).

For the statements around benefits and pensions, women were not significantly more likely than men to disagree. Instead, they were more likely to not have an opinion (answering don't know or neither agree nor disagree). This suggests that there is a knowledge gap among some women regarding the benefits and pensions they or their colleagues receive or are entitled to.

Perceptions of the unequal treatment of men and women again differed according to organisation, role and different demographic criteria too.

When analysed according to organisation:

- Fire and Rescue Service staff were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to promotion and career advancement (24% disagreed).

When analysed according to role:

- Police Staff – among who women are more strongly represented – were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to the same salary levels (13% disagreed).
- Fire and Rescue Service Staff were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to promotion and career advancement (33% disagreed), the same salary levels (22% disagreed), and the same benefits (20% disagreed).

When analysed according to responsibilities:

- Those with line management or leadership responsibilities were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to professional training (13% disagreed), promotion and career advancement (23% disagreed), and receiving the same benefits (14% disagreed).

When analysed according to demographics other than gender, those belonging to groups with protected characteristics were more likely to feel men and women are treated differently in relation to workplace issues (as was the case with perceptions of equal treatment outlined in the previous section):

- Ethnic minority employees were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to promotion and career advancement (35% disagreed), the same salary levels (23%), receiving the same benefits (23%), and receiving the same pension (15%).

- Employees with a disability were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to professional training (15% disagreed) and promotion and career advancement (22%).
- LGBT+ employees were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to receiving the same benefits (18% disagreed).

Further to these differences, long-serving employees, parents and those aged 35-44 were more likely to identify unequal treatment of women:

- Those employed for ten or more years were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to professional training (14% disagreed), promotion and career advancement (23%), receiving the same benefits (14%), and receiving the same pension (10%).
- Those aged 35-44 were more likely than average to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to promotion and career advancement (24% disagreed) and receiving the same benefits (15%).
- Parents were more likely to feel men and women are not treated equally when it comes to promotion and career advancement (21% disagreed).

4.3 General attitudes towards gender and race

Differences in opinion about the way in which men and women are treated at work can be seen as linked to differences in attitudes to gender in general, which the survey also found to have existed. Attitudes to gender were tested alongside opinions regarding whether the issue of and race has been discussed too much or too little.

4.3.1 Attitudes towards gender

Although misogynistic attitudes were not widespread, and appear to be less prevalent than those seen in a recent national survey of the UK population¹⁷, there were clear differences between organisations, roles, and demographics. Misogynistic views were more prevalent among men, and specifically Firefighters and Police Officers. In contrast, Police Staff and women were less likely to hold these opinions.

Attitudes towards gender were tested by asking employees whether they agreed or disagreed with four statements which were also used recently with the general public.^{18 19} The statements and employee responses were:

- “Traditional masculinity is under threat today” – agreed (17%), disagreed (45%);
- “Feminism does more harm than good” – agreed (10%), disagreed (49%);

¹⁷ Note that due to different methodologies it is not appropriate to make a direct comparison between the staff survey and a public survey, especially as social desirability bias is likely to be higher in the staff survey and the qualitative research suggests staff know what the ‘right’ answers should be, even if they do not necessarily agree with them.

¹⁸ <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/inequality-between-women-and-men-doesnt-really-exist-say-one-seven-britons>.

¹⁹ On a national scale, recent research showed that in Great Britain 29% agreed and 34% disagreed that traditional masculinity is under threat today; one in five (21%) agreed that that feminism does more harm than good, with twice as many (42%) disagreeing; most Britons (57%) disagreed with the statement ‘gender inequality doesn’t really exist’, with 15% agreeing; and 16% agreed and 49% disagreed that men have lost out in terms of economic and political power or socially as a result of feminism.

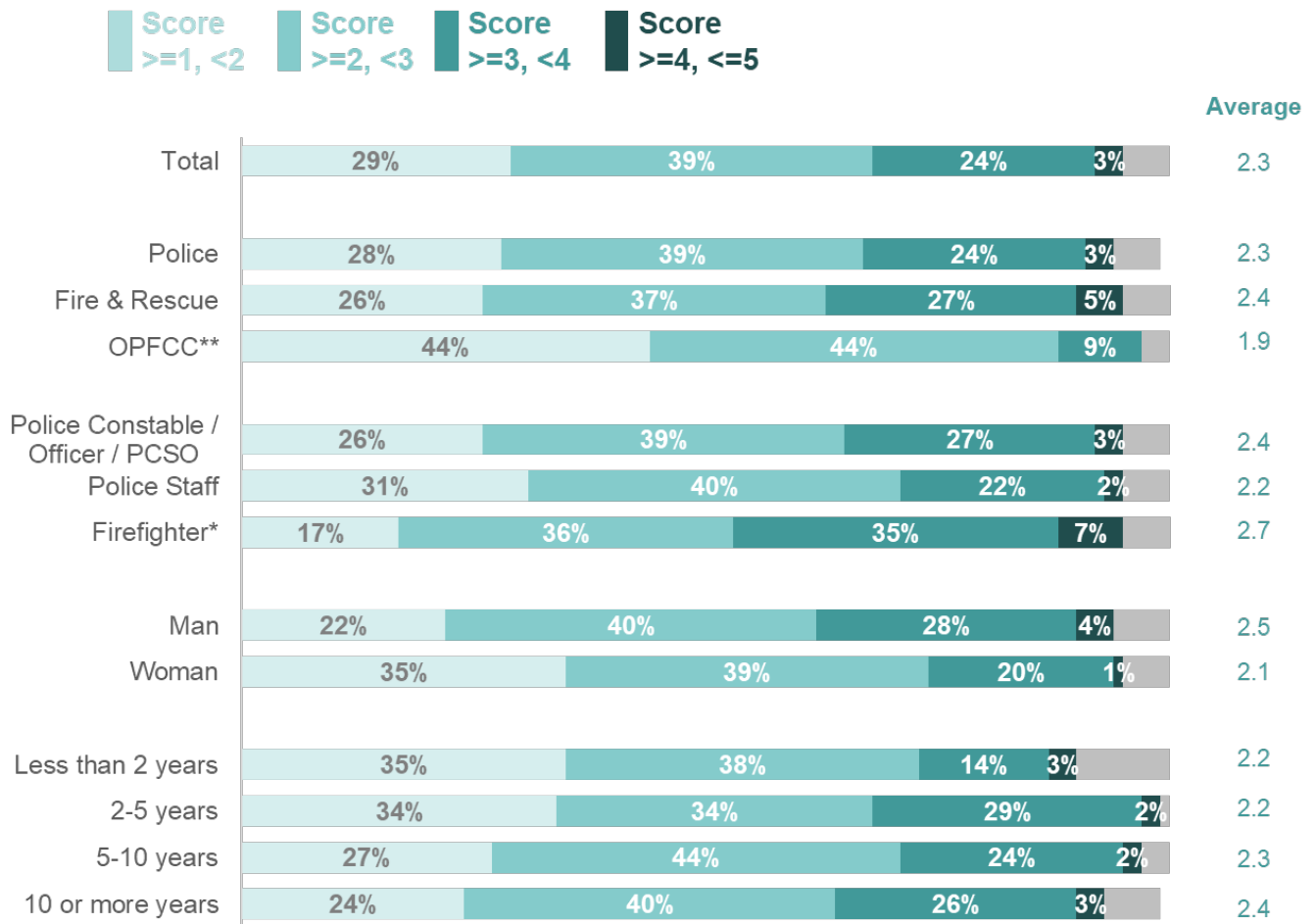
- “Men have lost out in terms of economic and political power, or socially as a result of feminism” – agreed (7%), disagreed (57%); and
- “Gender inequality doesn’t really exist” – agreed (9%), disagreed (60%).

To assess the extent to which individual participants held gender-biased/misogynistic views, we then calculated an Index score based on responses to the four statements.²⁰ This allowed for a more general analysis of attitudes towards gender. According to the index, misogynistic attitudes were more prevalent among Fire and Rescue Service (average score of 2.4) and Police employees (2.3) compared with the small number of OPFCC employees (1.9). Among specific roles, Firefighters had the highest score (2.7), with Police Officers (2.4) also scoring significantly above the overall average (2.3) as well as that for Police Staff (2.2).

Men (2.5) scored significantly higher than women (2.1). Otherwise, demographic differences were minimal, though the average score for those identifying as heterosexual (2.3) was significantly higher than that for the small sample identifying as LGBT+ (1.9). Those who had been in their organisation for ten or more years (2.4) also scored significantly higher than average, with the average for this group also significantly higher than those who have been with their organisation for up to years (2.2).

²⁰ Index scores have been calculated by assigning values of 1 to 5 for ‘Strongly agree’, ‘Tend to agree’, ‘Neither agree nor disagree’, ‘Tend to disagree’ and ‘Strongly disagree’ answer codes for each of the GP2 statements. Value scores across the four statements in the battery were then added together and divided by the number of statements where an answer has been provided. Index scores range from a minimum of 1 (least misogynistic) to a maximum of 5 (most misogynistic). Where participants have answered either ‘Don’t know’ or ‘Prefer not to say’ to all four statements, an index score has not been calculated.

Figure 4.4: Gender attitudes index scores (1 = least misogynistic ; 5 = most misogynistic)



Base: All employees (920)

Qualitative deep dives: scenarios

In the qualitative deep dives, we used three generic scenarios where appropriate to explore different potential manifestations of gender-based discrimination. The three scenarios were:

1. Men disrespecting women in a meeting
2. A man being promoted when a woman was the best candidate
3. Gender-based jokes and banter

Responses to these scenarios were varied, with none systematically identified as occurring across an organisation.

Scenario 1 resonated with women who had been in meetings with the Fire and Rescue Service, although not everyone thought they had seen it happen. In the Police service, examples were more isolated but this did occur, and often manifested as senior officers disregarding the professional input of a civilian staff member. However, increasingly women thought that this behaviour would be called out if it happened in the Police. Some suggested that men talking over women could simply be a matter of men talking more loudly so not hearing the woman speaking simultaneously.

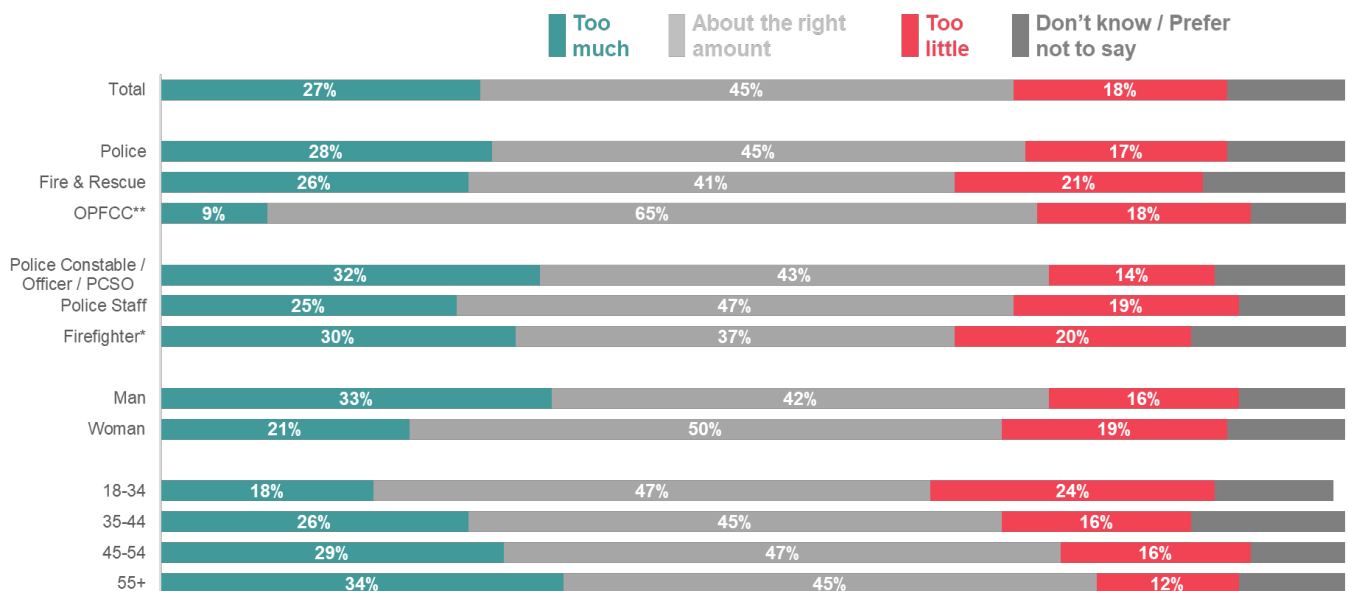
Scenario 2 was less common as few had recent experience of the promotions process and noted that things can change. One person mentioned a female colleague had quit her role after failing to get a promotion because she felt she had been better qualified than the successful candidate and could not see a future in the service. Apart from a couple of isolated incidents, most Police thought their processes would make this unlikely to occur, but that male colleagues might suggest that positive discrimination led to the less qualified woman getting a role.

Scenario 3 was apparently much more prevalent in the Police 5-10 years ago but has now been largely eliminated, except in pockets where there are very few women present to challenge it. This includes body-worn camera footage where there were only two male Police Officers present at the time, or trainers who do not know the women well and believe they can get away with it. However, most feel that it would be called out, and men describe being 'more careful' now. In the Fire and Rescue Service, some described it as a 'boys club' where it was still acceptable to make comments about a female staff member walking through the office. However, others felt that this was no longer the case.

4.3.2 Attitudes towards racism in Britain

When asked about the extent to which racism has been discussed in Britain over the last year, overall more than one in four (27%) felt it has been discussed too much. Just under half (45%) said it has been discussed about the right amount, with one in six (18%) of the view it has been discussed too little. Police Officers (32%), men (33%) and those aged 55 and over (34%) were more likely to think that it has been discussed too much. Indeed, there is a clear age gradient – the older an employee was, the more likely they were to hold this view.

Figure 4.5: Generally speaking, do you think that the issue of racism has been discussed in Britain too much, too little, or about the right amount over the last year?



Base: All employees (920)

Qualitative deep dive: racism in the Police and Fire and Rescue Service

Although not the focus of the interviews, several participants described the difficulties faced by people from different ethnic backgrounds. They felt that men from ethnic backgrounds would have similar difficulties to women in the workplace. One person also gave an example of someone

racially profiling a colleague, and explaining to them that they were familiar with the Asian community because they had a friend from Pakistan.

5 Workplace Guidance and Training

In addition to assessing attitudes towards inclusion and diversity in the workplace, the research also captured awareness of and views regarding the training and guidance the three organisations provide on these matters. These are matters of importance to the organisations. For instance, as part of its 2021-2022 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Strategy Priorities, Northamptonshire Police has committed to ‘ensure that all of our staff ... are trained in recognising and mitigating the effects of unconscious bias’.²¹ Meanwhile, HMICFRS’ report into Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service recommended that the organisation should ‘engage with its staff to develop clear EDI objectives and training to increase awareness of EDI and its importance’.²²

Overall, most employees were aware of their organisation offering guidance on inclusion and diversity matters, and half or more said they have read guidance on the five items tested (‘Equality, inclusion and diversity in workplace’, ‘Improper and prejudicial behaviour and attitudes in workplace’, ‘Use of social media and messaging’, ‘Abuse of position for a sexual purpose’, and ‘Sexual misconduct in the workplace’). Around three in four (73%) were also aware of their organisation offering training on inclusion, equality and diversity in the workplace, with more than half (57%) saying they have attended this. However, awareness and attendance at training on other matters was much lower (see **Table 5.1**).

Consumption of guidance and attendance at training also tended to be higher among Fire and Rescue Service employees – where issues around inclusion and diversity and forms of workplace discrimination appear to be greater.

5.1 Guidance

Across the three organisations, the most common form of guidance that employees were aware of and had read was that on ‘equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace’ (76%). However, Fire and Rescue Service employees (90%) were more likely than those in other organisations to have read this guidance.

Police employees (54%) reported greater awareness and consumption of guidance on ‘abuse of position for a sexual purpose’ compared with Fire and Rescue Service (35%) and OPFCC (21%) employees. For the three other forms of guidance tested – ‘sexual misconduct in the workplace’, ‘use of social media and messaging’ and ‘improper and prejudicial behaviour and attitudes in the workplace’ – levels of awareness and consumption were similar for Police and Fire and Rescue Service employees. Although base sizes are small, OPFCC employees were less likely to have been aware of and read these pieces of guidance.

Compared with those without such responsibilities, those in leadership and line management positions were more likely to report being aware of and having read all types of guidance.

There were few differences between demographic groups.

²¹ See Northamptonshire Police, Gender Pay Gap Report: 2021 to 2022, Appendix B (2022), available online at: https://www.northants.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/northamptonshire/disclosure_2022/northamptonshire-police-gender-pay-gap-report-2021-2022.pdf

²² See HMICFRS, Fire & Rescue Service 2021/22 Effectiveness, efficiency and people An inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (July 2022), pp. 38-41, available online at: <https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/northamptonshire-fire-and-rescue-service-report-2021-22.pdf>.

Qualitative deep dive: policies and guidance

Although not covered in a lot of detail, participants suggested that policies might not be sufficiently detailed or go far enough in some cases. A specific example was the lack of a clear course of action where a person persistently engaged in low level discriminatory behaviours which in themselves might not justify action being taken but when considered together contribute to a less positive working environment.

Some also noted difficulties relating to reasonable adjustments, part-time and flexible working or job share options. They thought more work could be done to support people requesting these so that there were not limits on which teams they could join or what roles they could undertake. It was also noted that parental leave is typically still described as maternity leave, with little awareness that men may choose to take extended leave to look after a new child in the first year. One woman also suggested that they should be given time to regain fitness after having a child.

5.2 Training

When it comes to being aware of and having attended training, Fire and Rescue employees were more likely to have been to training on 'equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace' (75%), 'improper and prejudicial behaviour and attitudes in the workplace' (43%), and 'use of social media and messaging' (31%). Within the Fire and Rescue Service, attendance appeared to be similar between Firefighters and Fire and Rescue Service Staff. However, the latter (27%) were more likely to have attended training on 'abuse of position for a sexual purpose' compared with Firefighters (13%).

Within the Police, attendance differed significantly according to role. For all matters except 'equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace', the proportion reporting they were aware of and had attended training was significantly higher among Officers compared with Police Staff.

Those with line management or leadership responsibilities (62%) were also more likely to have attended training on 'equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace' compared with those who do not have these responsibilities (54%).

Demographic differences were again minimal. However, compared with women, a greater proportion of men have attended training on 'sexual misconduct in the workplace' (24% vs 14%) and 'abuse of position for a sexual purpose' (23% vs 13%).

Qualitative deep dive: training as a tick box exercise

Where discussed, most qualitative participants described the online training and guidance as being treated as a tick-box exercise and not necessarily taken seriously. People rush through the mandatory bits while paying little attention. The more in-depth training provided to a subset of staff was perceived to be much better – bringing the issues to life and making them feel more real – but people were unclear how that learning could be effectively shared more widely.

Many attributed issues at least in part to a lack of effective training. In the Police they noted that the training and guidance focusses on the 'big things' but misses out more nuanced points which could contribute to positive culture change. In the Fire and Rescue Service, the lack of emphasis put on this training, compared with other courses, added to the impression that it was not being taken seriously.

5.3 Training - satisfaction

For each category, around seven in ten who reported having attended said they were satisfied with the training provided. However, this sentiment was primarily qualified, with close to half 'fairly satisfied' and around one in four 'very satisfied' for each category. No more than 9% were dissatisfied with the training provided – with the highest level of dissatisfaction being recorded for that on 'equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace' training - the mostly widely attended of all. Dissatisfaction with this training was higher among Fire and Rescue Service employees (23%) – notably Firefighters (28%) – compared with other groups.

Low base sizes mean that it is not possible to carry out robust sub-group analysis for satisfaction with the other four types of training asked about.

Table 5.1: Awareness of guidance on / training covering inclusion and diversity matters / satisfaction with training provided on these matters

	WE05A: Aware of guidance				WE05B: Aware of training				WE06: Satisfied with training (among those attended)	
	Yes (Net)	Yes – and read	Yes – but not read	No	Yes (Net)	Yes – and attended	Yes – but not attended	No	Satisfied (Net)	Dis-satisfied (Net)
Equality, inclusion and diversity in workplace	94%	76%	18%	1%	73%	57%	17%	6%	69%	9%
Improper and prejudicial behaviour and attitudes in workplace	87%	61%	27%	1%	54%	32%	22%	12%	71%	6%
Use of social media and messaging	91%	71%	21%	1%	48%	22%	26%	15%	73%	6%
Sexual misconduct in the workplace	86%	57%	29%	3%	43%	19%	24%	16%	72%	8%
Abuse of position for a sexual purpose	78%	50%	28%	4%	41%	18%	23%	16%	72%	9%

Base: WE05A & WE05B – All employees (920); WE06 – All who have attended training on these matters (Equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace – 521; Improper and prejudicial behaviour and attitudes in the workplace – 295; Use of social media and messaging – 203; Sexual misconduct in the workplace - 171; Abuse of position for a sexual purpose – 161).

6 Experiences of Discriminatory Behaviours

The survey featured a series of questions related to discriminatory behaviour that employees may have experienced or witnessed. This elicited detail on: awareness of complaints procedures; confidence that complaints would be dealt with in an appropriate manner; the types of discriminatory behaviours experienced/witnessed in the last 12 months; the characteristics that the most recent behaviours experienced/witnessed were prejudiced towards; the status of those responsible for the behaviours; whether complaints had been made about such behaviours; and experiences of the complaints process. The qualitative research then explored individual experiences of gender-based discrimination among those who reported they had been subject to or witnessed such discrimination.

More than half of employees (53%) had experienced or seen any discriminatory behaviour in the workplace in the last 12 months. Furthermore, around two-thirds of these cases took place across more than one incident. The most frequent discriminatory behaviours experienced or witnessed related to respect for others, while the most common characteristics these behaviours were aimed at were an employees' role/position and their gender.

Those responsible for discriminatory behaviours were often senior to or working at the same level as those subject to discriminatory behaviour. While two-thirds were confident that a complaint would be dealt with in an appropriate manner, a quarter were not confident – with this feeling being concentrated in certain groups.

Qualitative deep dive: the impact of discriminatory behaviours

In the qualitative interviews, people described a range of impacts of discriminatory behaviours. Depending on the severity and frequency of incidents, some people thought they could 'brush off' the occasional misogynistic remark (although would prefer not to), while others described feeling miserable or 'broken' and questioning their self-worth as a result of being repeatedly undermined.

In some cases, the outcome would be that women move teams or leave the organisation rather than continue in a role they find unbearable. This is a source of frustration as, as outlined above, people feel that the Police and Fire and Rescue Service are interesting places to work and are pleased to have the opportunity to work in these services so would not choose to leave.

6.1 Discriminatory behaviours

6.1.1 Types of behaviours experienced or witnessed

More than half of employees (53%) say they have either experienced or seen discriminatory behaviours in the workplace in the last 12 months.²³ Overall, 44% had experienced such behaviours, while 40% had witnessed them.

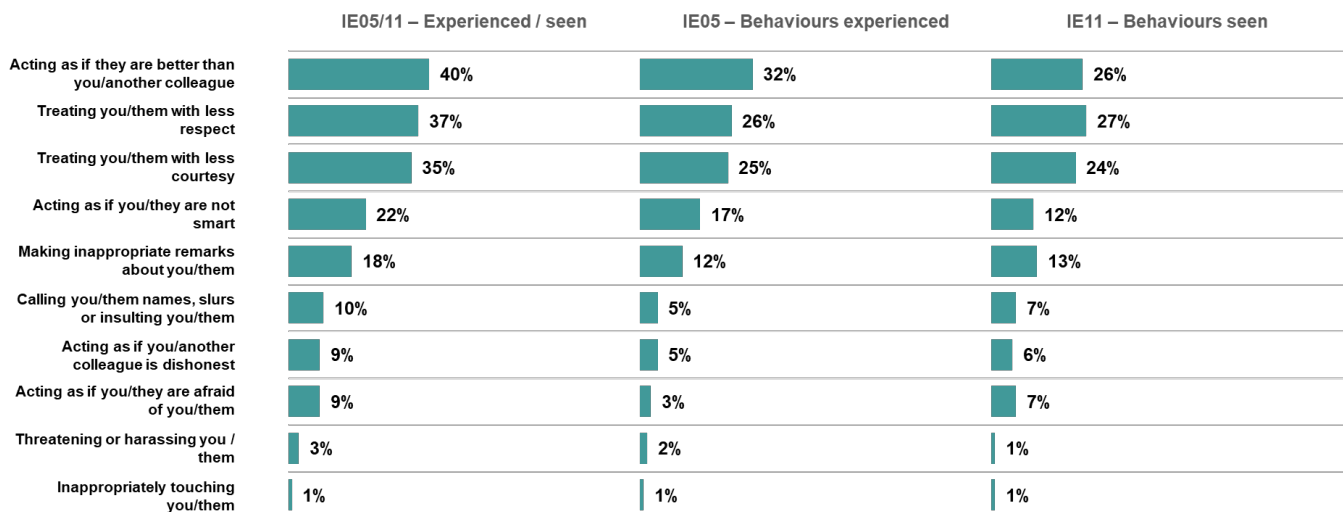
The most common behaviours experienced or seen were related to respect for others, with the three most widely cited behaviours being:

²³ This combined figure includes employees who have both experienced and witnessed discriminatory behaviours, those who have only experienced these behaviours and employees who have only witnessed them.

- Colleagues acting if they are better than you/another colleague (40%);
- Colleagues treating you/them with less respect (37%); and
- Colleagues treating you/them with less courtesy (35%).

Other behaviours were less frequent, but still present. More than 1 in 6 (18%) had experienced or witnessed inappropriate remarks being made, with one in ten (10%) experiencing or witnessing colleagues using names, slurs or insults aimed at them/others. Three percent of staff had experienced or witnessed threatening behaviour or harassment, with one percent experiencing or witnessing inappropriate touching.

Figure 6.1: In the last 12 months, which of the following, if any, have you personally experienced / seen colleague(s) experience while at work?



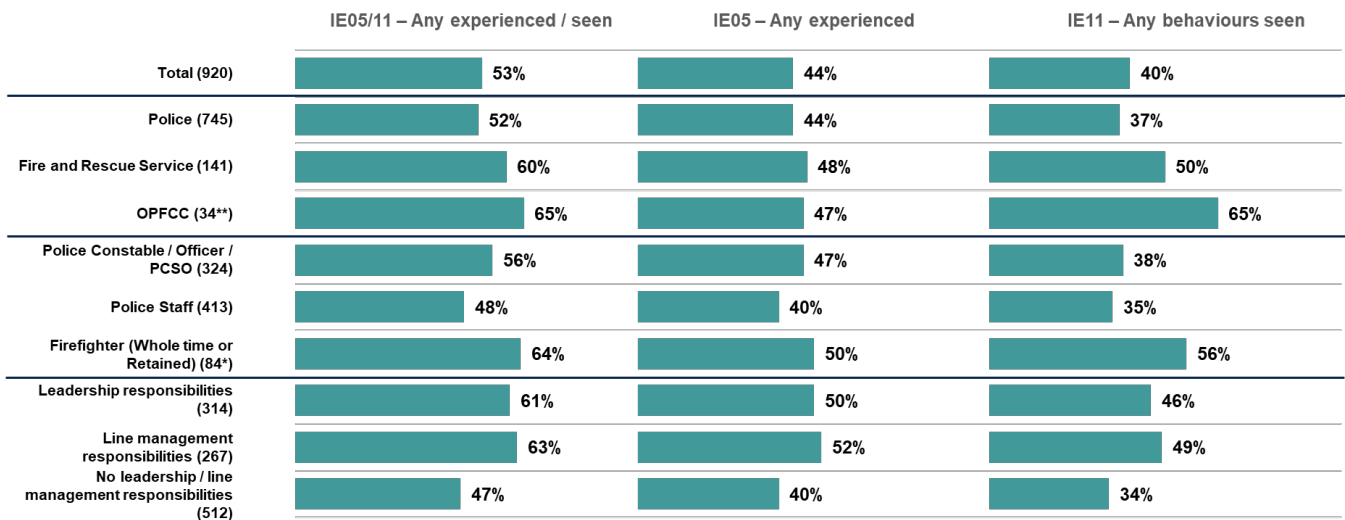
Base: All employees (920)

When comparing organisations, similar proportions reported having experienced any of the listed behaviours in the last 12 months. However, compared with Police employees (37%), greater proportions of Fire and Rescue Service (50%) and OPFCC (65%) employees reported having witnessed any of the behaviours asked about while at work.

There were differences according to level of responsibility. Those who have line management/leadership responsibilities were much more likely to report having experienced (50%) and seen (46%) discriminatory behaviours than those without such responsibilities (40% of who reported experiencing any of the behaviours and 34% of who reported seeing other colleagues experience them). Overall, more than three in five with such responsibilities (62%) had experienced or seen any of the behaviours compared with around half (47%) of those without.

Significant differences according to work role were less apparent though. Nevertheless, Police Officers (56%) were more likely than Police staff (48%) to have experienced or seen any behaviours.

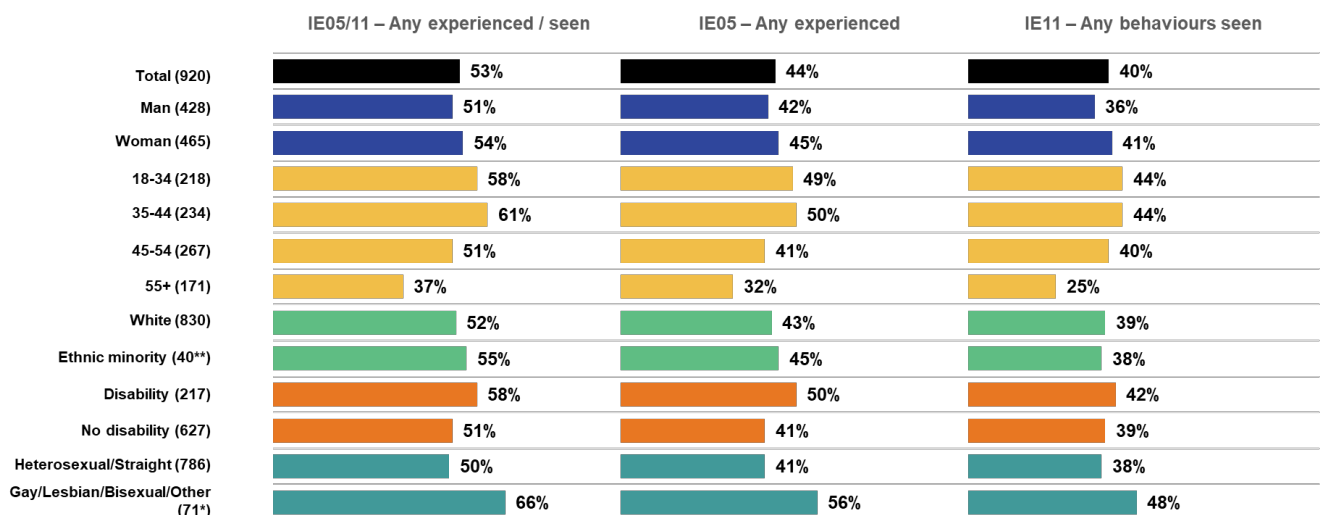
Figure 6.2: Discriminatory behaviours experienced / seen by organisation, role and responsibility



Base: All employees (920); sub-group base sizes indicated

There were not many differences between demographic groups. Notably, women were neither more nor less likely than men to have experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviours overall. Employees aged 35-44 (61%) and those who identify as gay/lesbian/bisexual (66%) were more likely to report having experienced or seen any of the behaviours, while those aged 55+ (37%) were less likely to report having done so.

Figure 6.3: Discriminatory behaviours experienced / seen by demographic groups



Base: All employees (920); sub-group base sizes indicated

6.1.2 Frequency of behaviours

In addition to over half of employees having experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviours in the workplace, in around two-thirds of cases these took place across more than one incident.

Qualitative deep dive: repeat offenders

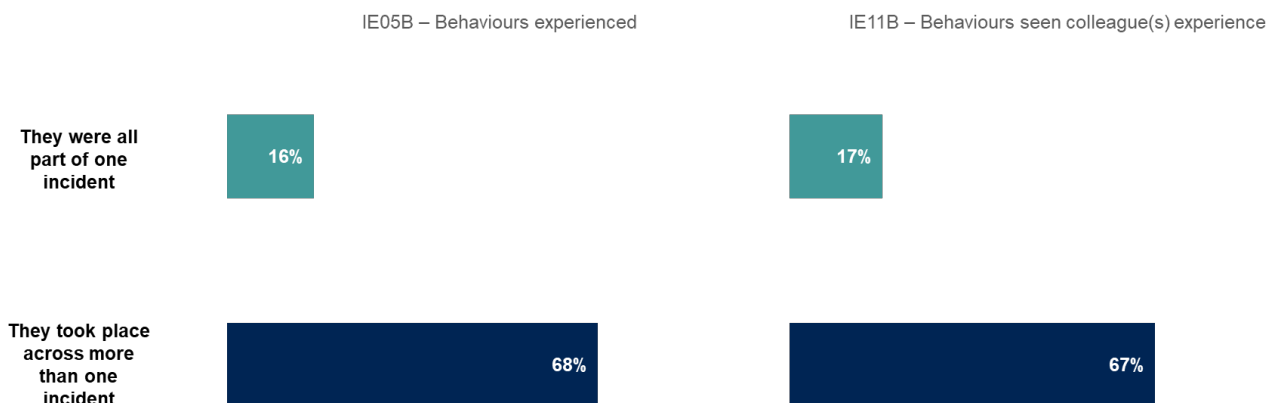
Several of the interviewees mentioned men with ‘a reputation’ for being difficult to work with. While they would find it reassuring to hear they were not the only person to have a problem with that individual, they were frustrated that action was not taken against these ‘repeat offenders’.

In the Fire and Rescue Service, discriminatory behaviours appeared to be more commonplace, and not necessarily focussed around a few individuals or teams.

Among those who had experienced discriminatory behaviours in the workplace in the last 12 months, 68% reported that they took place across more than one incident compared with 16% who said they were all part of one. Women experiencing discriminatory behaviours were more likely than men to report these having taken place across more than one incident (74%) too. However, men were more likely to say they did not know if the behaviours they experienced were all part of one incident (13%), rather than reporting that they were not.

Significant differences between groups were less apparent when asked about behaviours they had seen colleagues experience.

Figure 6.4: Thinking across the experiences, did these take place in one incident or more?



Base: All employees who have personally experienced discriminatory behaviours (409) / seen colleague(s) experience discriminatory behaviours (364) at work in the last 12 months

6.2 Reasons for discrimination

The survey also measured the type of characteristics that the most recent behaviours experienced or seen were prejudiced towards. This revealed experiences of discrimination that were based around a range of factors. However, three types of discrimination stood out as being more prevalent than others.

Employees experiencing or witnessing discriminatory behaviours were most likely to say that these were based around work-related reasons, with 27% reporting this. This figure represents a combined score for those whose response has been coded to ‘Your/their role at work’, ‘Your/their level of experience’, and ‘Your/their level of knowledge, skills, standard of work’.

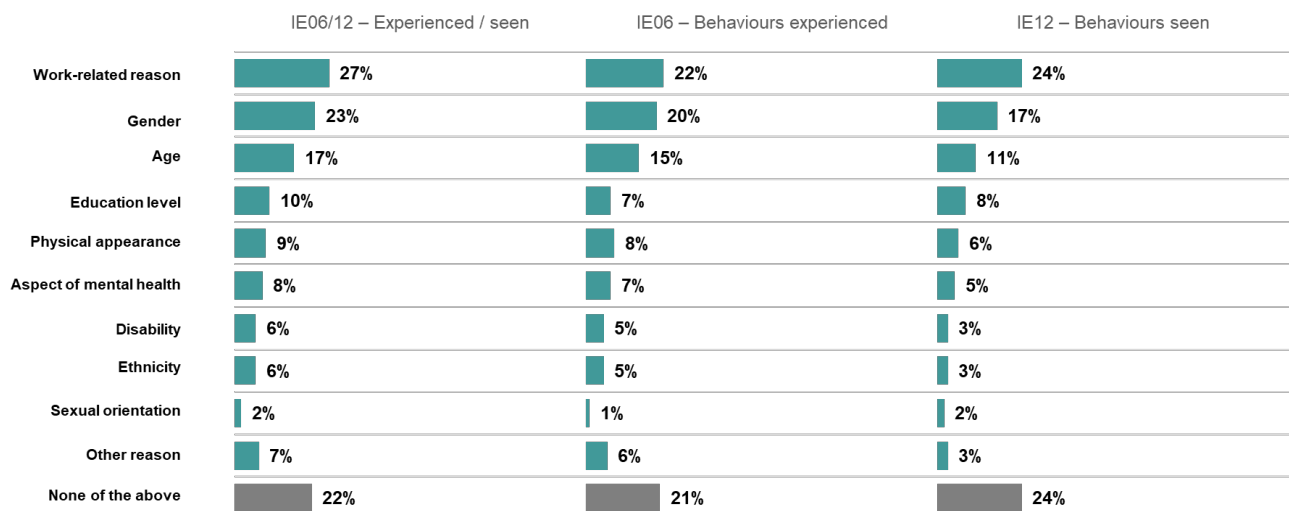
Qualitative deep dive: gender and role

Some qualitative participants described a sense of ‘us and them’ between operational staff / officers and support staff / civilians. As operational staff / officers are more likely to be male and support staff are more likely to be female, this can make it difficult to determine whether difficulties arise from gender- or role-based discrimination. Typically, women described male operational staff / officers as acting as if they were superior to female support staff / civilians, regardless of their experience and qualifications. It seems that the two forms of discrimination are intersecting or working simultaneously and consequently it can be hard to unpick the impact of both factors. However, examples where men would seek out other men to work with, even if they were less senior, suggests that, at least in some instances, gender was the main contributor. Some commented this may be particularly the case for more senior women, as there are relatively fewer of them.

Gender was the most common demographic characteristic targeted. Around one in four (23%) who had experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviours and who identified the most recent behaviour(s) mentioned that the discrimination was gender-based. Age was the second most commonly mentioned demographic characteristic targeted, with 17% having experienced or seen discrimination related to this. Discrimination based around other demographic characteristics was less frequent, though still present, with one in ten (10%) reporting or witnessing behaviours that targeted someone’s education level, 9% someone’s physical appearance, 8% an aspect of someone’s mental health and 6% saying behaviours were targeted towards someone’s disability or ethnicity.

Just over one in five (22%) said the behaviours experienced or seen did not target any particular characteristics.

Figure 6.5: Which, if any, of the following characteristics would you say the person or people responsible for these behaviours were prejudiced towards?



Base: All employees who have personally experienced / seen colleague(s) experience discriminatory behaviours at work in the last 12 months for whom most recent behaviour experienced is known (IE07/14 – 421; IE07 – 342; IE14 – 293).

Note: other reason covers participants answering ‘Your/their transgender identity’, ‘Your/their religion’ and ‘Your/their personality’, as well as those coded to ‘Some other reason’.

When it came to gender-based discrimination, certain groups were more likely to report having experienced this. Among women who had experienced any behaviours (and for whom the most recent behaviour(s) are known), gender was the most cited target (29%), ahead of work-related reasons (23%).²⁴ Those with leadership/line management responsibilities (28%) were also more likely than those without (13%) to report having experienced gender-based discrimination. Compared with Police Staff (13%), Police Officers (25%) were more likely to have experienced this too. Unlike for behaviours experienced, women (18%) were no more likely than men (16%) to say they have witnessed other colleagues experience gender-based discrimination.

There is evidence to suggest that other forms of discrimination were more likely to have been experienced by particular groups too. Those aged 34 or under (22%) were more likely than average to have experienced age-based discrimination. Although the difference compared with the average is not statistically significant, employees aged 55+ (19%) were significantly more likely to say they experienced age discrimination compared with those aged 35-54. Meanwhile, employees with a disability were far more likely than average to mention having experienced discrimination related to a disability they have (17%), as well as an aspect of their mental health (14%).

These data suggest that for many perpetrators of discriminatory behaviour in the workplace, staff members’ personal characteristics are targeted.

6.2.1 Behaviours experienced by those subject to gender discrimination

The most common types of discriminatory behaviours experienced or witnessed and targeted at someone’s gender related to respect for others. This was similar to the case at an overall level, as outlined earlier in the chapter.

However, for behaviours targeted at gender, the incidence of other behaviours – notably colleague(s) them with less respect, making inappropriate remarks and inappropriate touching – appeared to be higher.

The table below outlines the most recent behaviours experienced or witnessed, comparing those mentioning they related to gender with all employees who revealed the behaviours experienced most recently.

Table 6.1: Most recent behaviours experienced / witnessed²⁵

% experiencing this behaviour most recently among...		% witnessing this behaviour most recently among...	
All identifying most recent behaviour(s) (n = 342)	Those saying the behaviour(s) related to their gender	All identifying most recent behaviour(s) (n = 293)	Those saying the behaviour(s) related to a

²⁴ In contrast, men who had experienced behaviours were much more likely to say these were related to none of the reasons listed (30% compared with 16% of women).

²⁵ Data for this table are taken from IE05 (experienced) or IE12 (witnessed) if a participant selected only one behaviour at these questions. If a participant selected two or more behaviours at IE05 or IE12, then data are taken from IE05C or IE12C – which asked participants to select the behaviours experienced/witnessed most recently.

	(n = 69*)		colleague's gender (n = 50**)	
Treating you/them with less respect	39	55	44	46
Acting as if they are better than you/another colleague	46	49	41	40
Treating you/them with less courtesy	37	48	39	40
Making inappropriate remarks about you/them	20	36	20	36
Acting as if you/they are not smart	20	25	15	28
Calling you/them names, slurs or insulting you/them	6	7	9	16
Threatening/harassing you/them	4	6	3	8
Inappropriately touching you/them	1	6	2	6
Acting as if you/another colleague is dishonest	6	4	8	10
Acting as if you/they are afraid of you/them	2	4	7	14

Qualitative deep dive: different types of discriminatory experiences

Some women, especially in the Police, were quick to downplay their experiences compared with what they have read in the media coming from the Casey Review. Some were questioning whether the issues were 'all in their head' although having spoken to female colleagues were often assured that they were not alone in their experiences. The experiences included:

Language, comments and name calling

- Inappropriate language underpinning the wider culture: use of language, especially by senior leadership, can impact on how people feel they are valued. This was more commonly cited relating to the Fire and Rescue Services. Examples include people referring to 'firemen' not 'firefighters', and talking about 'the girls' (often when referring to support staff) or using 'females' rather than 'women'.
- Name calling and slurs: there were examples of women being called 'weird', 'prude', 'slapper', 'love' and other crude or inappropriate names. There were also some examples of comments such as 'she slept her way to the top' or 'you can only get in here if you have a vagina'. Again,

these types of example were mentioned more often in association with the Fire and Rescue Service.

- Inappropriate comments: There were also examples of comments directed at women which would be unlikely to be directed at men, such as commenting on a person's appearance (e.g. 'you look ravishing today'), saying they are 'aggressive', asking if they are pregnant or about their intention to have children or assuming they would want to go part-time after returning from maternity leave. Sometimes apparently positive phrases could be weaponised such as 'Oh brilliant, another strong, independent woman' or mirroring language back in an aggressive way e.g. 'Oh we'd hate to belittle you, we'd hate to patronise you'.

Undermining women's professionalism

- Women described being gaslit or being told they were the problem, either directly or through complaints to their boss. Typically, in these situations their boss would reassure them that they were acting professionally, and it was a case of the other person not appreciating the need to follow a different process to the one they had historically. However, in the meantime the woman would have been undermined in meetings, belittled, and talked down to.
- Some found that men, particularly in the Fire and Rescue Service, would seek out a man to work with, even if he did not have the seniority to make a decision. Equally, tasks or questions might be addressed to a man, where a woman in the team was better qualified. These men might admit to seeking to bypass a 'difficult woman' when talking with male colleagues.
- There were several examples in the Police of women feeling they needed to work twice as hard, or perform better than men in order to be considered equal. This was particularly true in physical activities where men would be quick to hold a mistake against a woman. As noted elsewhere, it was not uncommon for women to be told by colleagues they had only got a training place or promotion because they were a woman.
- There were also examples of men 'testing the boundaries' when a new woman joined the team. For example, making the new woman wear more kit to see how she coped, or not doing what their new boss requested to see what would happen. This behaviour would typically change once the woman was established in the new team.

Inappropriate interactions

- Several participants discussed examples of men losing their temper, and shouting or screaming at them which was considered unprofessional. A couple commented they did not see the men lose their temper with other men in the same way. This behaviour was often combined with insults and unconstructive feedback, sometimes in front of colleagues. Participants emphasised that this is not an appropriate way to handle such conversations.
- A few people in the Police gave examples where men expressed their intention to try to prevent the woman progressing, or intentionally made their life difficult by giving them shifts or allocations on training courses that were difficult to manage alongside other responsibilities.
- In a few cases, women described male colleagues admitting to 'checking out' or even 'rating' their female colleagues. They described a lack of boundaries and in some instances this extended into unwanted physical contact such as grabbing their shoulders or getting too close. Some also commented that men would not always maintain eye contact with their eyes sometimes elsewhere, which made women conscious of how they chose to dress for the workplace.

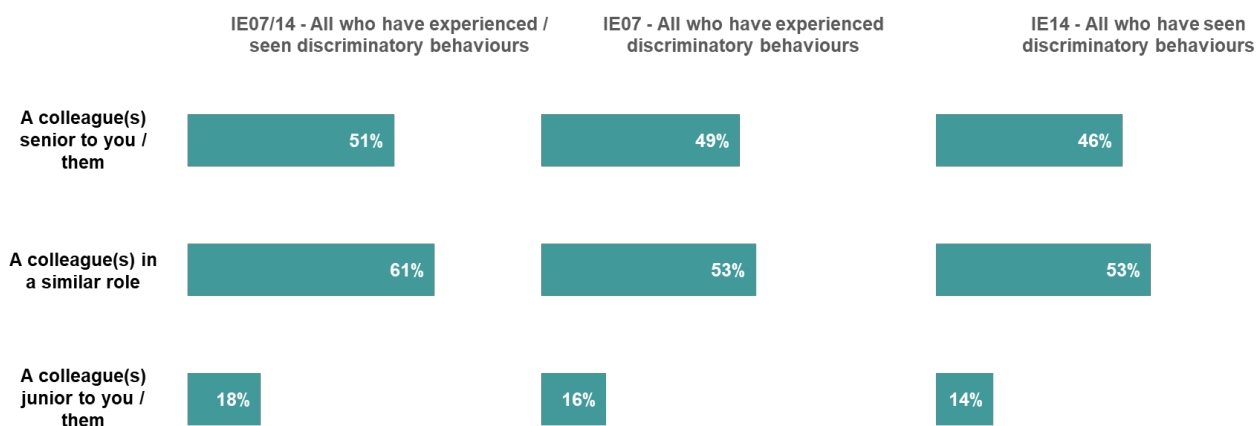
6.3 Responsibility for discriminatory behaviours

Most people responsible for behaviours experienced or witnessed were in similar or senior roles to the person subject to them.

After being asked to identify the behaviours they had experienced or witnessed most recently, employees were asked at what level those responsible for the identified behaviours worked, with it being possible to select more than one response (where multiple people were responsible). Among those who have experienced discriminatory behaviours, 53% said colleagues in a similar role to them were responsible, with 49% attributing the behaviours to colleagues senior to them. Just 16% said a colleague(s) junior to them was responsible. There were no differences in the seniority of those responsible for discriminatory behaviours experienced by women and men.

The same pattern then emerged when asked to identify who was responsible for discriminatory behaviours witnessed (53% attributed them to colleagues in a similar role to the person experiencing the behaviour(s), 46% said the person responsible was someone senior, and 14% said a colleague junior to the person subject to the behaviours was responsible).

Figure 6.6: Thinking across the most recent time this happened, what level were those responsible for these behaviours?



Base: All employees who have personally experienced / seen colleague(s) experience discriminatory behaviours at work in the last 12 months for whom most recent behaviour experienced is known (IE07/14 - 421; IE07 - 342; IE14 – 293)

Qualitative deep dive: who is responsible?

In most of the qualitative examples the person acting in a discriminatory manner was of a similar level or more senior than the person experiencing the discrimination. This also meant the person who experienced the behaviour was less likely to feel able to call it out, due to the influence the more senior person may have over their future career opportunities. Almost by definition, more senior colleagues could be more traditional in their approach and would be surrounded by people with similar experiences – especially in the fire service. The concern was that these men would then encourage similar behaviours in the next generation, effectively perpetuating discriminatory behaviours, embedding these attitudes within the organisation so that even as the most senior people retire, those waiting to step up will continue with similar attitudes and behaviours.

Of those to have experienced discrimination related to gender, 57% said colleagues senior to them were responsible, 45% that colleagues in a similar role to them were responsible and 19% that colleagues junior to them were responsible.

Among the 50 employees who had witnessed others being subjected to discrimination related to their gender, 54% said those responsible were senior to the person experiencing the behaviours, 52% that they were at a similar level and 18% that they were in a junior position.

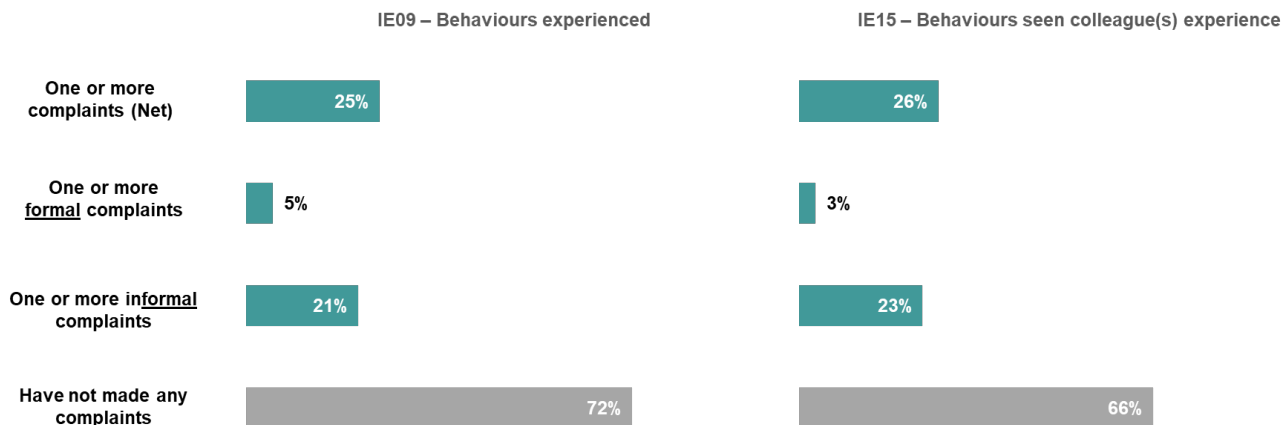
6.4 Complaints procedures

6.4.1 Frequency of reporting discriminatory behaviours

Despite the prevalence and frequency of discriminatory behaviours, in most cases complaints were not made about them.

There were no differences in the likelihood of making a complaint about behaviours experienced or witnessed either. Only around a quarter (25% for behaviours experienced, 26% for those witnessed) reported having made one or more complaints, be that formal or informal. Indeed, formal complaints were very rare. Only 5% reported having made a formal complaint about the behaviours they experienced, with just 3% formally complaining about those they witnessed. Instead, if a complaint was made, this was more likely to have been an informal complaint.

Figure 6.7: Thinking across all the behaviours you experienced / saw colleagues experience in the last 12 months, have you made a complaint or complaints at your workplace about any of these?



Base: All employees who have personally experienced discriminatory behaviours (409) / seen colleague(s) experience discriminatory behaviours (364) at work in the last 12 months

Qualitative deep dive: why don't people report incidents?

In line with the survey data, most of the interviewees decided not to take any action. There were a number of reasons for this:

- **Lack of confidence:** some felt unsure of themselves and were not confident calling out the behaviour, especially if they were new in role. They also rationalised that individual incidents could be relatively minor, so would not justify a complaint in isolation.

- Lack of evidence: some were concerned that often incidents were in a one-on-one meeting so that it would become a question of their word against the other person's. They had heard stories of people twisting the facts and saying the woman had misunderstood and did not think it would be worth going through that experience.
- Concern about repercussions: those who were more established were aware that others had been labelled 'difficult' and thought that challenging the behaviour could backfire. Some were conscious that even an informal discussion with a manager could end up written down and once that happened it may later be used as evidence. None believed it was truly possible to make an anonymous report as the person would always ask for specific examples and evidence which by definition would identify the individual involved.

Sub-group analysis of the questions asking about complaints is constrained by limited base sizes. However, among those who have experienced discriminatory behaviours, women (28%) were more likely than men (19%) to have made a complaint – either formal or informal. Police Staff (31%) were also more likely than Police Officers (17%) to have made a complaint. However, there was no difference between these groups when it came to making a formal complaint.

6.4.2 Awareness of complaints procedures

Despite the low numbers of complaints being made, reported awareness of complaint procedures is high. Nevertheless, many lack full details of these. Furthermore, some groups among which awareness was greater were more likely to lack confidence that a complaint would be dealt with appropriately.

Overall, 91% were aware of the procedure if they wished to make a complaint about the behaviour of a colleague at work, with 43% fully aware and 48% aware, but not in detail.

Qualitative deep dive: formal complaints are the 'nuclear' option (for the complainant)

While some participants were comfortable raising issues with their manager, few would consider making a formal complaint. Some described this as the 'nuclear' option as it was perceived to be a long, involved process which would take them away from their day job and could result in them being branded a 'trouble-maker' so they might find it hard to return to their role afterwards. Additionally, they thought it could impact on their career and progression opportunities. Also, they were not confident a complaint would be evaluated objectively and would lead to change, so it was viewed as a high personal risk with a low probability of a positive outcome.

"I've seen other people challenge things and I've seen how badly that went for them."

Within the Police, incidents were often not perceived to be 'serious enough' on their own to justify a formal complaint. Mostly people were confident addressing the issue themselves or through less formal routes. They did note that this could mean that repeat low level offenders might not be identified or dealt with appropriately. Knowing the law about harassment and sexual offenses might also make people more reticent to make a complaint about an action that would not be considered illegal. There was also a suggestion that if you complained you would be complaining to a colleague and potentially a friend of the person who you were complaining about, and as such they might not be sympathetic. As outlined above, the lack of tangible evidence in many instances also made people less confident about raising a complaint.

Levels of awareness were similar across the Police and Fire and Rescue Service. However, within the Police there were differences according to role as Officers (53%) were more likely than Police Staff

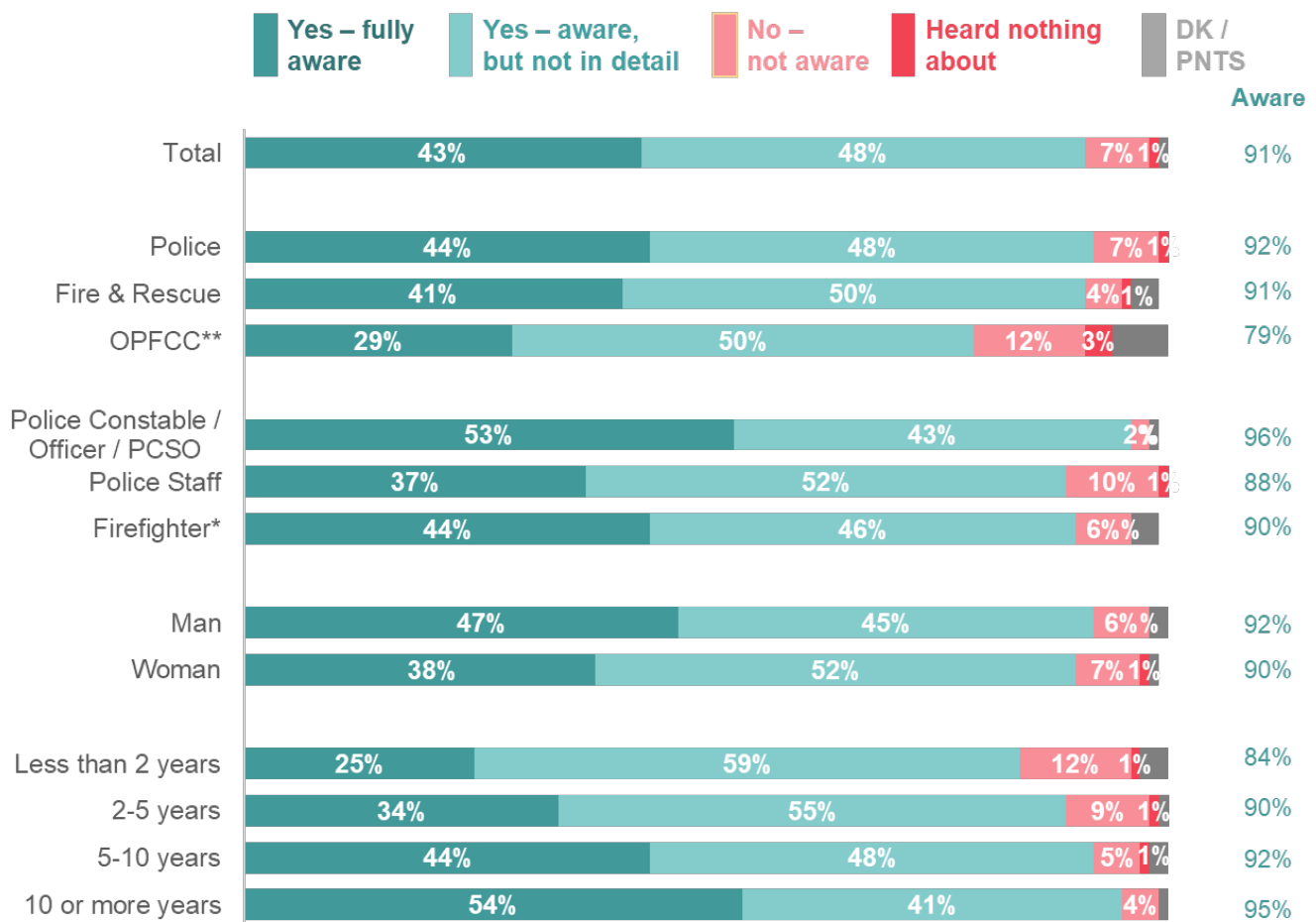
(37%) to be fully aware, with around one in nine (11%) Police Staff either not being aware or having heard nothing.

Awareness was greater too among those with leadership/line management responsibilities (96% aware, 56% fully aware), compared with those with neither (88% aware, 34% fully aware).

There was also a relationship between length of service and awareness of procedures, with those working for their organisation for 10 or more years (54%) being more than twice as likely as those with their organisation for two years or less (25%) to be fully aware. Meanwhile, male members of staff (47%) were more likely than women (38%) to say they are fully aware.

Those who have personally experienced or seen colleagues experience discriminatory behaviours were no more likely than average to be aware of complaints procedures. Among those who have experienced or witnessed behaviours related to gender, 94% were aware, with 52% fully aware.

Figure 6.8: If you wished to make a complaint about the behaviour of a colleague at work, to what extent are you aware or not of the procedure for doing this?



Base: All employees (920)

6.4.3 Confidence in complaints procedures

As well as awareness, the survey also asked how confident employees were that their organisation would deal with a complaint in an appropriate manner. Overall, around two-thirds (68%) were confident

that this would happen, though this sentiment was largely qualified with 49% fairly confident compared with 20% who were very confident. In contrast, one in four (26%) were either not very or at all confident.

There were significant differences between organisations. Confidence was significantly greater among Police employees (72%) than among Fire and Rescue Service (50%) and OPFCC (59%) employees. Among Fire and Rescue Service employees, opinion on this question was largely split, with 43% saying they were not confident.

Other notable groups also lacked confidence that a complaint would be handled appropriately. Those with leadership/line management responsibilities (30%) were more likely not to be confident compared with those with neither such responsibilities (21%). Furthermore, confidence was lower among staff with a longer tenure – among those with their organisation for 10 or more years, 31% were not confident, compared with just 9% of those who have been employed by their organisation for less than two years.

Confidence was also significantly lower among those who have personally experienced (52% confident, 43% not confident) or seen colleagues experience discriminatory behaviours in the workplace (53% confident, 42% not confident). These groups were then notable for being twice as likely compared to the average to not be at all confident that their organisation would deal with a complaint in an appropriate manner.

Those experiencing or witnessing gender-based discrimination were somewhat less confident still. 47% said they would be confident, with only 9% very confident. In contrast, around half (49%) were not confident, with 21% expressing they were not at all confident.

While the views of men and women were the same, there were significant differences between demographic groups with protected characteristics. Employees with a disability (30% not confident) were less confident than those who do not have a disability (22%). Furthermore, although the number of ethnic minority employees interviewed was small, this group (40% not confident) were less confident than staff members who are white (23%).

Qualitative deep dive: (lack of) confidence in processes

People who had experienced or witnessed discriminatory behaviour were not at all confident in the processes available for challenging these behaviours. Only a couple mentioned positive outcomes as a result of raising a concern.

Some had escalated concerns but had received no response or felt nothing had changed as a result. Others had found the response to be dismissive (e.g. 'They weren't sexist, they were just an arse.' Or 'people are really passionate in fire, don't worry about it, we've all been on the receiving end of that, yes, no that's just how he is') so they felt that escalating concerns was futile. These issues were more common for issues relating to the fire service.

Across both the Police and Fire and Rescue Service, people were conscious that if they made a complaint it would reflect back on them - although the process is meant to be confidential everybody always knows when a complaint has been made and who is involved. Some had experienced comments from other people relating to the original incident, suggesting that 'the lads' had been talking about it and belittling the woman's perspective.

Finally, a few suggested that challenging behaviour just meant the behaviour was adapted to be less overt. This demonstrated that the men were aware that what they were doing was wrong, and were finding ways to continue the behaviour in a way that was harder to take action against.

In a few instances (mostly in the Police) the men involved did give a genuine apology to the woman when they were told they had acted inappropriately. In one case, the man was in tears. However, the women were relatively cynical about this, and believed the men were contrite because they realised that it would limit their career if they did not make amends, rather than genuinely believing they had done something wrong. However, an apology was rare and more often than not people said they would not know what happened, if anything, as a result of their complaint.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

This report outlines that all three organisations are on a journey. While the Fire and Rescue Service potentially has furthest to go, all three organisations have room for improvement. It is clear from the qualitative research that this will require strong and committed leadership, especially given the strongly hierarchical nature of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services, and that currently not all leaders appear to be 'walking the walk'. People understand that change takes time, but also want to see more assertive action taken against those who appear unwilling to change.

The key recommendations from the qualitative research participants are outlined in the box below.

Qualitative deep dive: what participants would like to see

The first priority is for the services, and particularly the Fire and Rescue Service, to acknowledge that gender discrimination exists and needs to be addressed. This needs to go beyond 'lip service' and the senior leadership should demonstrate why think it is genuinely important, and not just the latest 'must do' because the media are interested. Staff want to see a commitment to identifying the issues and finding solutions. Sharing this report internally will help with this.

"I'm not on a witch hunt for somebody to lose their job, what I want is acceptance, acknowledgment and then actions to ensure that it can be a safe place" (Participant)

When people raise issues, they should feel supported not blamed and should be taken seriously. As seen above, people do not make the decision to come forward lightly. Ideally there should be a way to raise complaints that does not lead to a long, drawn-out process which may have negative impacts on the complainant involved. The Police have come some way in establishing a more open culture although there appear to be pockets where discriminatory behaviour continues. The Fire and Rescue Service has more to do in order to demonstrate a commitment to listening and then acting on concerns.

"When I raised things, I was made to feel like I was the problem and I feel I was blamed. I didn't want to carry on raising things after that point." (Participant)

Most believe that training could be improved significantly to support culture change. They want the training to go beyond the basic facts and to cover the impact that discrimination can have, making it more real for participants. The training should aim to leave participants ready and willing to challenge the behaviour of others, as well as raising awareness of the nature and impact of microaggressions in the workplace. Asking people to consider 'would I say that to a male colleague' could be a helpful exercise to reveal some of these issues.

"What can you [say to] somebody whose views are outdated? Well they will just make sure they don't make that comment again. And perhaps that's enough, but do you change their actual thought processes and their way of thinking by just saying to somebody, 'You can't say that'? It doesn't change their way of thinking, does it?" (Participant)

It is important to note that some changes have already been noticed and receive support:

- New methods for reporting including an email address or app to raise concerns
- The new Equalities Officer in the Fire and Rescue Service
- VLOGs which make the views of senior leadership in the police more visible
- Features on Forcenet which share real-life examples to challenge perceptions

"I actually think to continue on the path they're on. They're putting all the right things in place to do it. Over the last year obviously there has been a bit more [of a] focus on the misogyny side of things, and I think it's all going the right way. I think they just need to continue what they're doing." (Participant)

Once it is clear what behaviours are and are not acceptable, participants want to see more follow-through for repeat offenders and a better way to keep a record of instances. While they are surprised people still need leeway, they are willing to give the benefit of the doubt while people learn to change. However, as noted above, this tolerance should not be indefinite and there should be a commitment to remove people from their roles if they repeatedly refuse to change their attitude and behaviour. People also wanted to see more support for managers to address these behaviours, rather than expecting them to handle it without support.

"Not quite your three strikes and you're out, but it is that kind of thing... because ultimately nothing is changed, because there are no consequences, or no real consequences, there's no impetus to change." (Participant)

Finally, participants suggest that those who report concerns should be given feedback so that they are assured action has been taken as a result of their efforts. Some also suggest the victim should be involved in deciding an appropriate outcome to their complaint.

Measures need to be taken to address the volume of workplace discrimination, notably to reduce the frequency with which staff members feel they are treated in a disrespectful and discourteous manner. By implementing better training for everybody, and by senior leaders role-modelling appropriate behaviour, awareness of issues should be increased, and the number of incidents should decrease. To help employees call out behaviour when it does continue, there need to be lighter touch reporting mechanisms with a commitment to ensure that reporting will not impact on individual's careers, noting that more subtle cases of discrimination often happen in private not public spaces where there are no witnesses. It will be vital to build confidence and trust in these new mechanisms.

Our qualitative research focussed specifically on gender-based discrimination, as that was the most commonly experienced and witnessed behaviour based on demographic characteristics. However, some of the other survey questions indicate there is work to do to develop an inclusive and diverse environment for all employees across different demographic groups and job roles. It would therefore be helpful to undertake more work with these groups to understand any similarities and differences in their experiences.

Finally, it is worth considering committing to repeat the survey, after changes have been made, to measure whether they have had the intended impact. In the meantime, more visible reporting of action taken to address discriminatory behaviours could help build people's confidence that if they speak up they will be listened to and action will be taken.

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