



Research Findings

Are police forces past their due date?

Examining the impact of pregnancy, maternity leave and returning to work on women in policing



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If you support working parents during and after parental leave in a positive and caring way, you will achieve long term engagement and productivity from these employees which will benefit the organisation in the long term.

- Police Staff, Maternity Leave 5+ years ago

"Working mothers need to feel supported in the workplace - the culture of 'she has to leave for childcare' needs to be removed. Women should feel empowered that they are raising children and providing a service to the public"

-Police Officer, Maternity Leave 1 year ago

"I think we have a long way to go in order to accept women and their needs in relation to maternity and returning to work".

-Police Officer, Maternity Leave 2 years ago

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Executive Summary



This research set out to increase knowledge of maternity experiences within policing. This study was the largest survey carried out on this topic in the public sector to date. Responses have provided the team with a wealth of both quantitative and qualitative data.

- 5920 participants (women) took part in the survey which used a combination of closed, open and demographic questions. This equates to approximately 11% representation of UK police officers who identify as female. The survey resulted in over 9000 free-text comments revealing the lived experiences of women going through the maternity journey.
- The survey focused on three stages of maternity experience: pregnancy, maternity leave and returning to work.
- 48 home office and specialist forces took part and included women aged between 21 and 46+ all whom have had at least one period of maternity leave whilst working for the police
- Of those who identified their role, a total 1061 staff and 4345 officers took part, from a wide range of roles and ranks.

Several key findings emerged and are discussed in full within the report:

- Quantitative results showed that participants were reasonably positive about their treatment and support by their supervisor and colleagues when pregnant however this was a different scenario upon returning to work.
- Less than half of respondents had a meeting with their manager prior to their maternity leave and of those that did only 33% found it of value. Follow up analysis showed that if a participant had moved into a new role there were significantly less likely to have had a meeting with their manager prior to going on maternity leave
- Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of their force's support for their mental health during their pregnancy. Only 32% of participants agreed that they felt their force supported their mental health whilst pregnant
- Analysis showed that supervisor support, support from colleagues and a valuable pre-leave meeting is positively correlated (indicative) with perceptions of mental health support.
- Whilst on maternity leave the research showed that only 55% of respondents used keeping in touch (KIT) days, but when they did 71% found them useful. Only 45% of respondents stated they had been provided information about the financial implications of maternity leave and 55% stated then had not received any information.

Executive Summary continued...



- Before returning to work, a large proportion of respondents, 77% requested a flexible working pattern, yet 23% found the process of requesting flexible working to be simple, with 53% disagreeing. Furthermore, 44% of participants disagreed that they had ample opportunity to discuss and request a flexible working pattern with their manager, and 20% said it took over 3 months to get the request approved
- On returning to work just over half of respondents felt they were afforded the same professional and promotional opportunities, with 77% stating their career aspirations had now changed. 53% of respondents felt that their mental health was not supported since returning from maternity leave, with qualitative analysis showing that some respondents either weren't given the opportunity to discuss their mental health when returning to work, or didn't feel comfortable disclosing any conditions diagnosed post birth.
- Additionally the experiences of returning to work showed that 67% of respondents felt supported by colleagues but this dropped to 49% when asked of supervisors support- in contrast to 73% during the pregnancy stage.
- Regression analysis showed that if a person stated they had a disability, had less time in service and were police officers they had a poorer perception of support during their pregnancy
- Further regression analysis exploring perceptions during maternity and when returning to work showed that if a force displays flexibility towards polices when managing people on maternity leave, colleagues support and knowing where to go to raise an issue they were more likely to feel supported in their maternity journey.
- Qualitative analysis of the open comments demonstrated a number of ways by which a force can significantly improve the experiences of officers and staff whilst pregnant, on maternity leave and returning to work. These findings included;
 - Supportive return process
 - Supervisory support and training
 - Better informed on maternal mental health
 - Clearer policies, procedures and support processes
 - A tailored approach- being treated flexibly and on an individual basis
 - More awareness around maternal bias and ending the motherhood penalty

The number of responses received for this piece of research shows there is significant work, and sharing of good practice to be done if forces are to protect, value and retain their much needed diversified workforce. Recommendations and implications for changes in practice going forward are discussed.

Background Literature

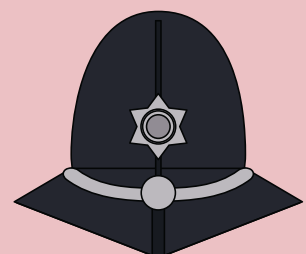
Why is this research important?

Historically police forces have been male-dominated places of work (Diaz & Nuno, 2021), however in the last decade forces have actively promoted recruitment drives with the aim to diversify the workplace, including increasing the number of female officers recruited. This concerted effort has led to number of female officers in UK police forces increasing to over 50,000 (Gov.uk, 2022). Charman & Tyson (2022) carried out research examining the stark increase of voluntary resignations, some of those reasons cited included the lack of visibility around flexible working mothers in senior roles. The research within this report supports the notion that forces must look forward, and change some working practices around embracing motherhood as a part of policing, if they wish to retain their much longed for and much needed diversified workforce.

Maternity and Policing

It's an evolutionary fact that a large number of employed women will go on to have at least one period of maternity leave during their career. However, there has been little police-based research published recently around officers and staff returning to the workplace after maternity leave.

Anecdotal evidence from UNISON and Police Federation members suggest that experiences of maternity leave vary. Some experiences have been positive, with individuals referring to the support and information they received when they were off or returned from maternity. However the majority appear to have had less than ideal experiences; the lack of support received, difficulty in getting flexible working arrangements, the slow speed of shift changes and more often than not their experience in their actual return to the workplace. This, including individuals who returned to find most of their kit 'borrowed' or missing, it had been assumed they wouldn't be returning to their previous role 'as they now had a baby'.

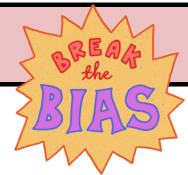


Literature continued...



Maternity & the wider workplace

A survey conducted with over 1000 women across all sectors (People Management, 2019) found that less than a fifth of women felt confident when returning to the workplace after having a baby. 37% of women felt so unsupported and isolated on their return they considered handing in their notice, and 90% were not offered any formal support through a specific return to work programme. It was observed that organisations too often took a short-term view on maternity rather than seeing working mothers as a valuable asset. Whilst this survey was carried out in the private sector, there does not appear to be any research to the contrary for the public sector, specifically in policing. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018) found that 77% of mothers had a negative and, in some cases, a discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave and or returning to work. They also found one in five mother's experienced negative comments related to flexible working from their employer and/ or colleagues.



Maternal bias

Maternal bias Research has shown evidence of a level of maternal bias in organisations where colleagues view mothers – or pregnant women- as less competent and less committed to their jobs (Arena et al, 2023). Further research (Ogden, 2019) has suggested that working mothers face a specific type of bias named 'maternal wall bias' which can manifest itself in different ways for example in conducting performance evaluations or in opportunities for taking on challenging assignments or promotion opportunities because of their assumed lack of time and desire (Ogden, 2019). In a milestone study, Correll and colleagues (2007) found evidence for a 'motherhood penalty' which demonstrated that working mothers were only recommended 47% of the time for hire vs 84% of female applicants who didn't have children and were penalised on a host of measures including perceived competence. Furthermore, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018) found that a third of employers felt that women who become pregnant and new mothers in work are 'generally less interested' in career progression, when compared to other employees in their company.

Most studies of maternal bias however are not specific to policing yet the anecdotal evidence alongside previous research offers indicative results that warrant further exploration.

Both these areas of research suggest that there is still a lot of work to do around improving the experiences for women during the maternity journey. The potential benefits of this research are significant both locally and nationally if good practice and recommendations are adopted

Summary

The previous research discussed above suggests that there is still a lot of work to do around improving the experiences for women across all sectors of work, including policing during their maternity journey.

It is hoped that by thoroughly exploring mothers' experiences, we will be able to identify areas where police organisations can focus their support in order to help improve the overall maternity experience for policing employees. Academic research around maternity within policing is relatively scarce, yet with a changing workforce it is imperative that we explore mothers' views around these issues to ensure that police organisations get this right.

Key Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the research was to examine mothers' experiences in relation to three stages of maternity leave: experience of pregnancy, experience of maternity leave itself, experience of returning to work) within policing organisations across the UK.

Specifically, views were sought from mothers' examining several areas:

- experience of support and treatment from colleagues and supervisors
- views on job role surrounding pregnancy
- experience of interaction with manager throughout the maternity leave process and if the interaction was of value
- reasons for returning to work after maternity leave
- views on promotion, recruitment and CPD opportunities
- experience of KIT days
- views on HR policies and rights related to maternity leave
- experience of flexible working requests
- work/life balance
- postnatal mental health
- exploration of maternity bias and assumptions
- what improvements could be made by police organisations to enhance the maternity experience
- general feedback on experience



The findings aim to examine the extent to which each of these specific areas are related to overall satisfaction of mothers' experiences during the three stages of maternity leave.

Method

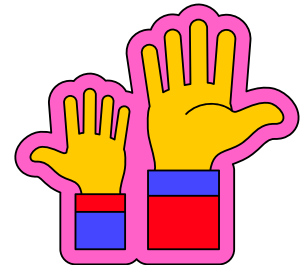
Research Design

An online survey using Qualtrics was designed which took place over a period of two months. The survey included a mixture of open-ended, qualitative and closed questions which were designed around three different stages of maternity experience: pregnancy, maternity leave and returning to work.

The majority of the questions were closed and involved asking participants a series of satisfaction questions using a Likert scale (1= Strongly Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4= disagree and 5= Strongly Disagree). Participants were then provided with the opportunity to provide a more in-depth response at the end of each sections. The questions also included several background and demographic questions. The survey was designed in consultation with the Police Federation, Unison, several police forces, women's groups and academics to ensure the questions were fit for purpose.

A request of the full survey can be made to the authors.

Participants



Data were gathered across all UK police forces (including specialist forces). The sample included 5920 women aged between 21 and 46+ all of whom had at least one period of maternity leave whilst working for the police. A total of 1061 staff and 4345 officers took part in the survey and a range of ranks and roles were obtained.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Open University Ethics Committee before the launch of the survey. Participants were recruited online through social media and through email communication from the Police Federation, several police forces (British Transport Police were designated as the lead force) and the Centre for Police Research and Learning at The Open University. Participants were voluntary and remained anonymous.

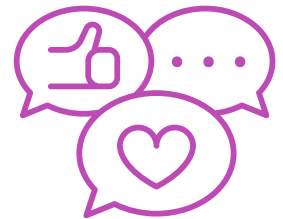
Method Continued...

Procedures



The online survey went live via Qualtrics on May 23, 2022, and it was open to respondents until August 2nd 2022. It was aimed at women who had taken a period of maternity leave while working for a police service and was open to all Home Office and Specialist UK police agencies. Before the survey began, an information sheet was given to the participants, and they agreed to consent before the survey commenced. All participants completed the survey in an average of 49 minutes.

Data Analysis



Quantitative data gathered was analysed using SPSS and Excel software and both descriptive (frequencies, crosstabs and correlations) and inferential (regression, anova and chi-square) analysis was utilised. Thematic analysis which is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Boyatzis, 1998) was carried out with the support of NVIVO software for the qualitative (free text comments) data.



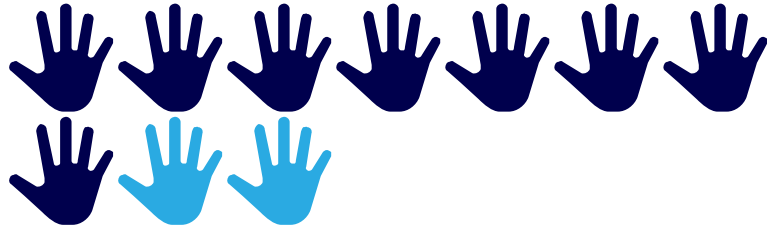
Demographics

- 5920 participants (females) in total. Equates to approx 11% of total females in police forces UK.



- 9345 free text comments received

- 80% Police officers
- 20 % Police Staff

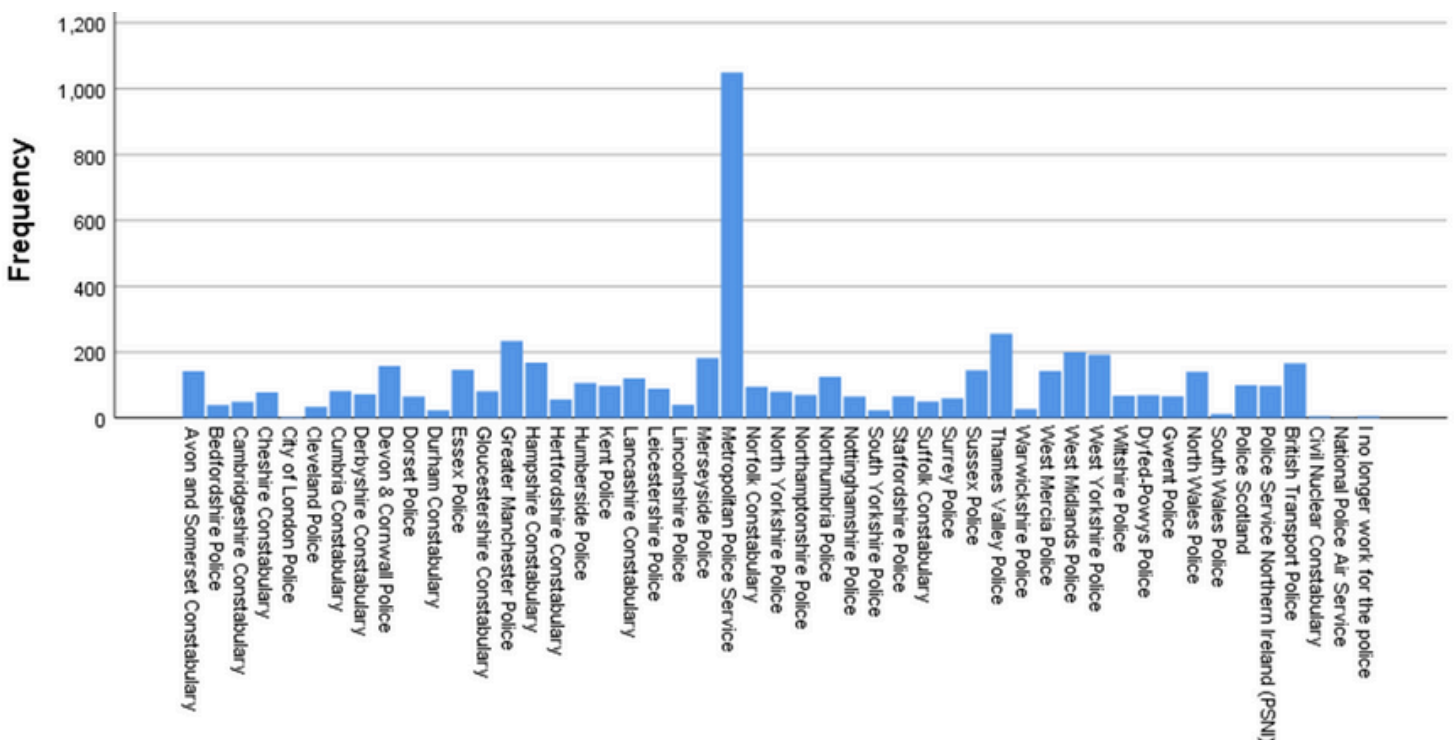


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Police Forces represented (Home office & specialist)

Largest responses:

- Met Police (1043)
- Thames Valley (255)
- GMP (233)
- West Mids (200)
- West Yorks (190)



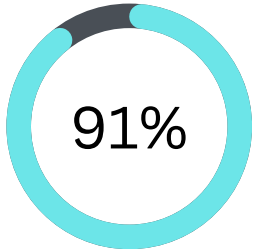
What force do you currently work for?

Demographics



Age Range of participants: 21-46+

Percentages: 21-34 = 21%, 35-45 = 58%, 46+ = 21%

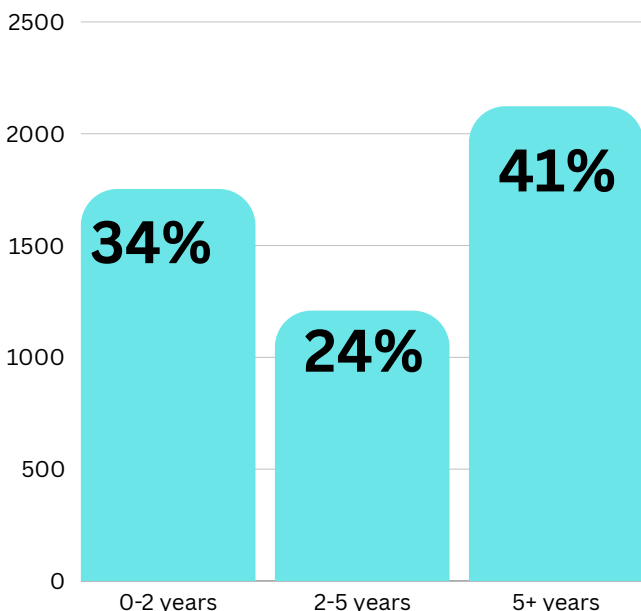
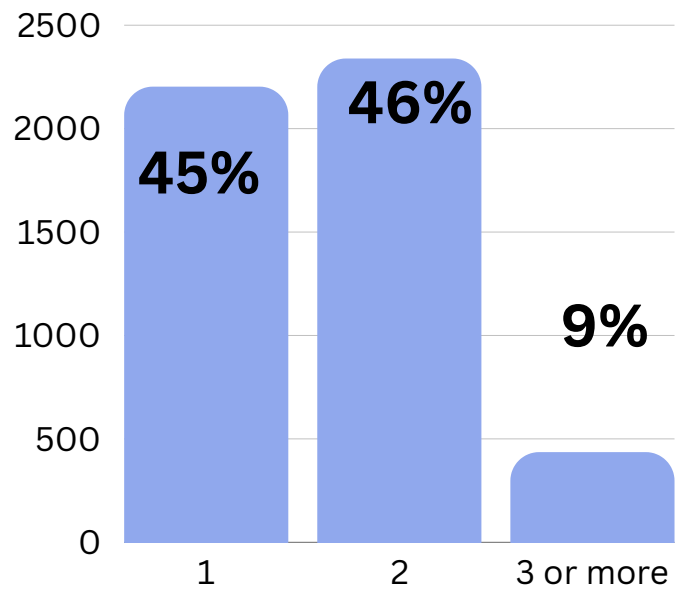


Identified as English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British. 7% identified in a different category and 1.5% preferred not to say



Disability = 90% no / 7% yes

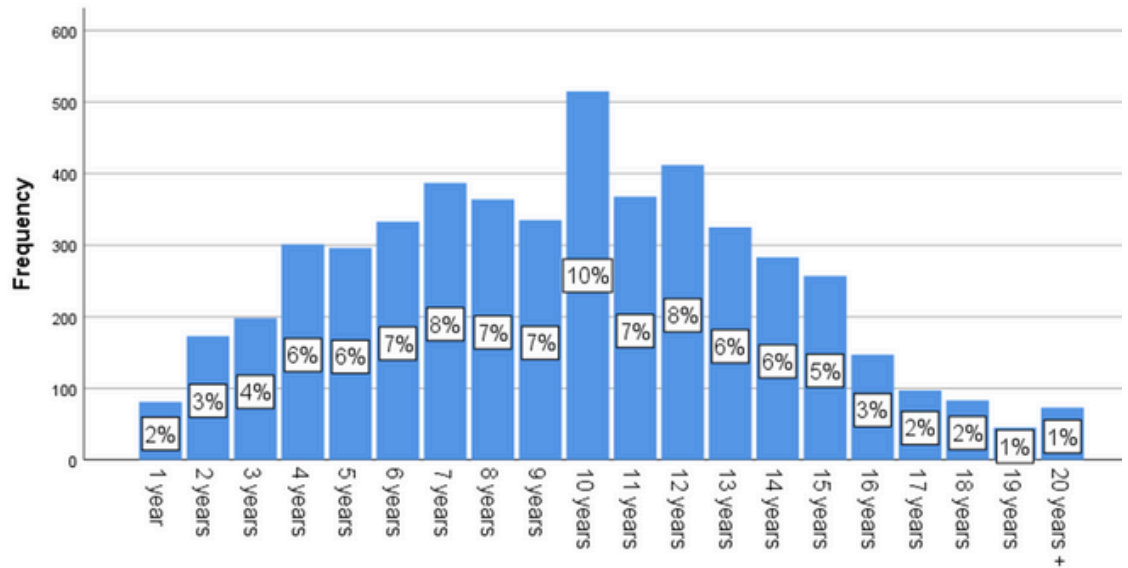
How many periods of maternity leave?



How long ago was last period of maternity?

Demographics

Length of service ranged from 1 - 20 years +



What length service/ employment did you have in policing when you started your last period of maternity leave?

Rank/Role when you started your last period of maternity?

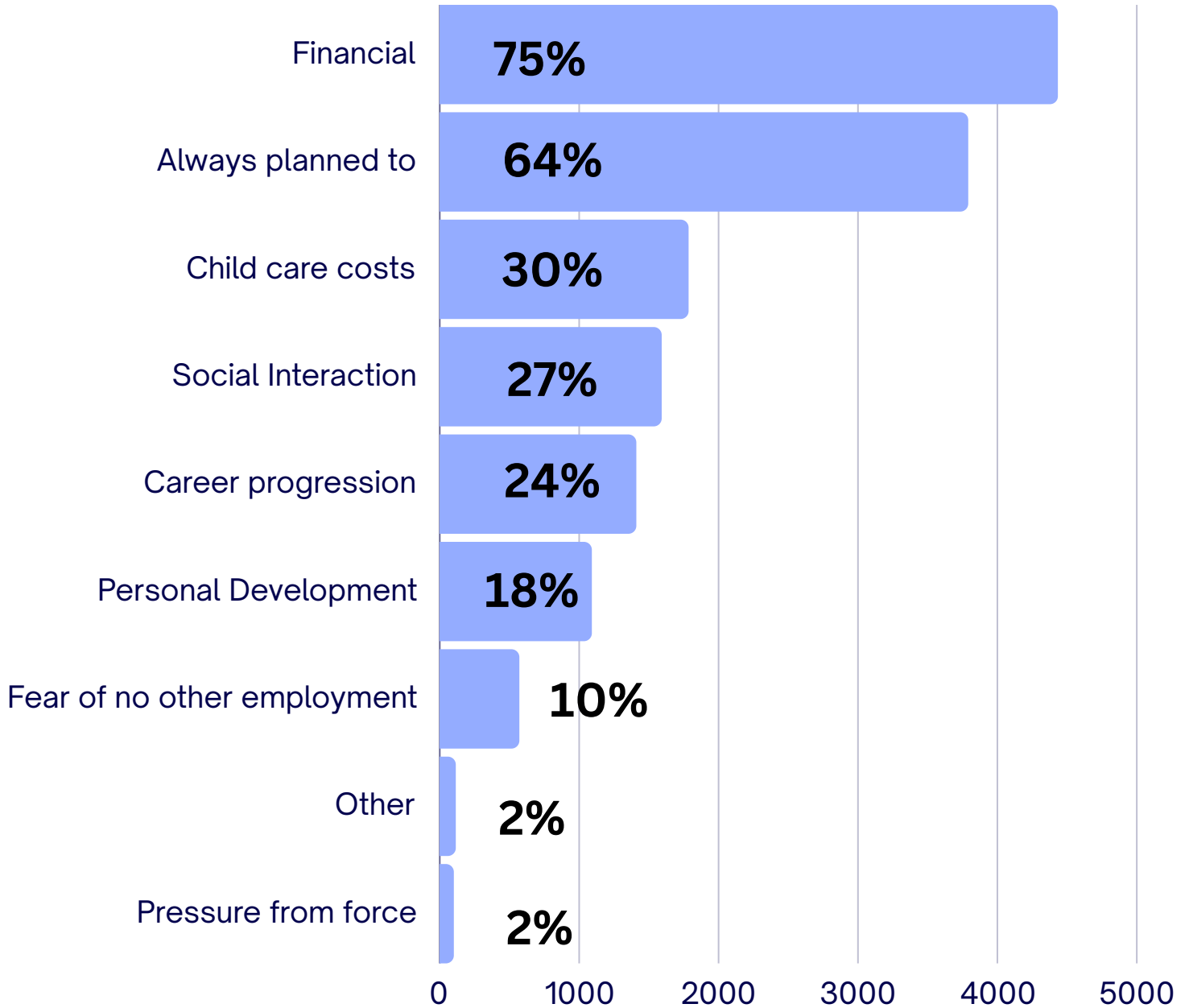
Most Frequent:

- Constable (65.5%)
- Practitioner (15.3%)
- Sergeant (11.3%)

	Number	Percentage
Practitioner	771	15.3
Line Manager	109	2.2
Middle Manager	67	1.3
Senior Manager	25	0.5
Probationer	77	1.5
Constable	3302	65.5
Sergeant	568	11.3
Inspector	108	2.1
Chief Inspector	13	0.3
Superintendent	3	0.1
Chief Superintendent	1	0.0
Executive Leader	1	0.0
Total	5045	100.0



Reasons for returning to work



Freetext comments: Reasons for returning to work

'because I loved my job &
wanted to return'



'concern that stepping
away for more than MAT
leave would make it hard to
get back into workforce at
same level'

'Pension'

'I didn't I had to resign as DC due to childcare and
was re-employed as police staff'

'worried about losing
the posting I had'

'To have
something of
my own'

'I have always enjoyed my
job and wanted to return to
work as well as needing to
financially'

'Financial
independence'



'To be a good role
model for my children'

'The force had gone
through whole force
changes and I feared
being out of touch'

Stage 1: Pregnancy

Quantitative findings:

The survey analysis was split into three different areas: Stage 1 contains questions that participants answered in relation to their pregnancy experience whilst at work. Several questions were examined exploring supervisor and colleague support & treatment, mental health support and whether participants had a valuable meeting with their manager prior to their maternity leave.

- the majority of participants were fairly positive about their treatment and support provided by their colleagues and supervisor during their pregnancy stage. The percentages are presented below:



*the 'neither' response hasn't always been published here unless it was a significant finding.
The raw data tables can be provided upon request

Stage 1: Pregnancy

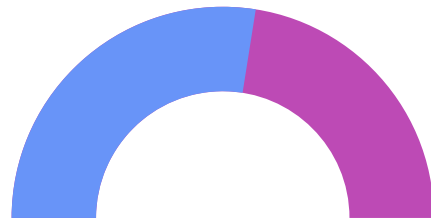
Quantitative findings:

Participants were then asked if they had a meeting with their manager prior to going on maternity leave. Significant results are discussed below:

- Over half of respondents (55%) answered no for this question indicating that a large proportion of participants did not have a meeting with their manager prior to their maternity leave.
- Of those that had a meeting with their manager only 33% actually found it of value with 23% citing they didn't think it was of value and 44% reporting neither agree nor disagree.
- Follow up analysis showed that if a participant had moved into a new role during their pregnancy then they were significantly less likely ($p < .01$) to have had a meeting with their manager prior to maternity leave.

Did you have a meeting with your **manager** prior to going on mat leave?

No =
55%



Yes =
45%

If you did have a meeting was it of **value**?

=

33% strongly/ somewhat agree
23% strongly/somewhat disagree

Mental Health Support



Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of their force's support for their mental health during their pregnancy. Only 32% of participants agreed with this statement whilst 38% disagreed.

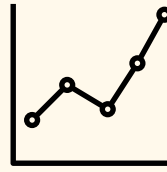
I feel like my **mental health** was supported by the force during my pregnancy

=

32% strongly/ somewhat agree
38% strongly/somewhat disagree

Stage 1: Pregnancy

Significant Correlations



Alongside the regression analysis detailed later in this report, there were a number of significant correlations that were found for stage 1. This means that when participants agree or disagree with a statement they are more likely to also agree or disagree with the significantly correlated statement. So for example:

There was a strong correlation found between perceptions of being treated fairly and perceptions of support (both colleagues and supervisors, $r=.84$). This means that if participants agreed that they were supported by their manager/colleagues they were more likely to agree they were treated fairly also.

The following significant correlations were also found:

- supervisor support and having a valuable pre-mat leave meeting ($r = .54$)
- supervisor support and mental health support ($r = .57$)
- support from colleagues and mental health support ($r = .43$)
- a valuable pre-leave meeting and mental health support ($r = .60$)



Qualitative Findings

Participants were asked to comment on their experiences during their pregnancy. The following main themes emerged from the feedback gathered:

- **Lack of contact and inconsistent contact**– this included a lack of meetings prior to going on maternity leave from the supervisor
- **Mental health support:** most comments were around the issue that mental health just wasn't a consideration despite issues being raised they were left unaddressed and as such they felt 'let down'
- **Supervisor/ Line manager** – mixed both positive and negative experiences, support, contact and lack of knowledge was discussed and supervisor support was described as a 'lottery'
- **Negative culture describing feelings** such as being forgotten/bullied/isolated during pregnancy

Stage 1: Pregnancy Freetext Comments

'No support given. Completely left alone. Attempted to do a risk assessment which was not pregnancy specific and when I asked for it to be adapted it just got left uncompleted.' - *Participant 18, Constable*

'My line manager and my force were excellent. I was allowed a lot of flexibility, as required.. I was given gainful and useful employment and felt appreciated and looked after.' - *Participant 172, Sergeant*



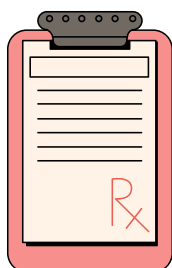
'I had a really supportive line manager. However, I feel I was discriminated based on pregnancy by my second line manager. Effectively there was a role coming up that I was being developed for, as soon as I told them I was pregnant, that development and support stopped. It was so frustrating as I believe this wasn't based on my capability, rather the fact that I would go on mat leave. I can't prove this but the sequence of events indicated this.' - *Participant 4019, Police Staff*



'Absolutely zero support for mental health. Seems like the force has no clue what do with pregnant officers / staff.' - *Participant 1431, Constable*

'I did not have a meeting with my line manager prior to going on maternity leave, I do not feel i was given very much advice or support. I had change of line manager throughout pregnancy which did not help. I felt like i had to hunt for all the information and help and support available to me.'- *Participant 4000, Constable*

'Not long after telling work I was pregnant I was sent to work from home (covid peak!), several positions came up to act as Sgt I told my DI that I wanted to apply and asked him to support me and I was told there would be no point in me applying as I was pregnant so wouldn't get it. This was 2020!' - *Participant 48, Constable*



'I was hesitant to declare as I had seen what the attitude was to pregnancy before.... My line manager didn't update me as non deployable so I had to turn out to a murder while pregnant in a pandemic. I had to write my own risk assessment, tell HR myself, update HR when she was born, update the systems as he did nothing but ask my colleagues about the manner of conception.. just awful!' - *Participant 171, Inspector*

'I was pregnant during covid, I had very little support from management regards to my needs and mental health. Supervisors were not knowledgeable in the care maternity wise.' - *Participant 235, Police Staff*

Stage 2: Maternity Leave

Quantitative findings:

Following on from questions about experiences of pregnancy, participants were asked questions about their experience while on maternity leave. Findings showed that only 52% of participants had regular contact with their manager whilst on mat leave and of these only 50% felt the contact was actually of value. The main survey findings are detailed below:

I had regular contact with my manager whilst on mat leave? *



52% Yes

48% No

I felt the contact I had with my manager was of value?



50% Yes

50% No

How often would you have liked to have been contacted?



- Once a month 21%
- Every 1-2 months 29%
- Every 2-3 months 27%
- Once a quarter 23%

Were you asked if you would like to be notified of promotion processes or recruitment opportunities whilst on maternity leave?



30% Yes

70% No

Of those that were asked if they wanted to be notified:



72% were notified whilst 28% were not.



*Of those that agreed to regular contact

Stage 2 : Maternity Leave

Participants were asked additional questions about their maternity leave experiences. Findings revealed that only 55% of respondents used KIT days, but when they did, 71% found them useful. When asked if they had been provided with any information about the financial implications of maternity leave, 55% stated that they had not received any information.

Before returning to work, 77% of respondents requested a flexible working pattern, but only 38% found the process of requesting flexible working to be simple, with 53% disagreeing. Furthermore, 44% of participants disagreed that they had ample opportunity to discuss and request a flexible working pattern with their manager, and 20% said it took over 3 months to get the request approved. Percentages are detailed below and on the following page:

Did you take any KIT days?



55% Yes

45% No

If you did, were the KIT days of value?



71% strongly/ somewhat agree
15% strongly/somewhat disagree

Were you provided with any information about financial implication of working KIT days on PMP, SMP and no pay?



45% Yes

55% No



Did you request a flexible working pattern before you returned to work?



77% Yes

23% No

I found the requesting a flexible working pattern a simple process



38% strongly/ somewhat agree
53% strongly/somewhat disagree

Stage 2: Maternity Leave

I was given ample opportunity to discuss and request a flexible working pattern with my manager before returning to work?



42% strongly/ somewhat agree
44% strongly/somewhat disagree

If you requested a flexible working pattern, how long did you have to wait to have your request authorised?



- Less than 1 month 28%
- 1-2 months 35%
- 2-3 months 17%
- 3 months + 20%



Qualitative Findings: Experiences during maternity

Participants were asked to comment on their experiences during their maternity leave. The following main themes emerged from the feedback gathered:

- **Lack of contact:** this included no or minimal contact from line manager/supervisor and also feeling as though they weren't kept informed about significant information especially about job vacancies and promotion opportunities.
- **Mental Health Support:** lots of discussion around postnatal depression, perinatal mental health and how they felt unsupported by the organisation. Comments around the stressfulness of applying for flexible working whilst off.
- **Supervisor/Line Manager Support:** Many comments about the lack of support and issues were raised around the changing of line manager whilst off, and the lack of knowledge on maternity related entitlements like KIT days and flexible working etc
- **Lack of information:** this links in with the supervisor support but many of the comments received discussed the lack of information about maternity entitlements and finding it difficult to access this information whilst on leave

Stage 2: Maternity Leave Freetext comments



'I had to return to work prior to being able to put in my flexible working request. I had to work full time for 6wks before it was agreed I could work part time. I was also told there was only one part time position available with late evening shifts. I'm a single parent so I'm fully relying on family to look after my child while I work as childcare isn't available during my shifts. I wasn't given an option to negotiate hours, it was that part time shift pattern or leave.'

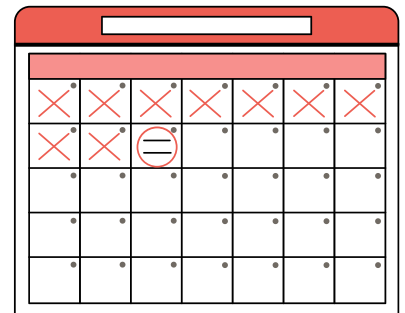
Participant 1189, Police Staff

'My line managers were really helpful and quick with authorising my flexible pattern. Our resource management unit then took a long time to get the pattern on the system which meant I had to chase it before returning.'

Participant 1173, Police Constable

'KIT days have been stressful to organise and be paid. I feel like I've had to chase up different departments and that different supervisors don't know enough about KIT days.'

Participant 14, Constable



'I had multiple flexible pattern requests refused by my new line manager despite conversations had with my previous line manager before I went on leave. In the end I was forced to take a different role.'

Participant 278, Sergeant

'I was not informed about KIT days and did not realise these were an option. I felt very disconnected from the organisation whilst on maternity leave and had no contact with any supervisor until I returned to work.'

Participant 3004, Constable



'I found the whole process of sorting out a flexible working pattern extremely stressful. The first time I submitted it nothing was done and when I chased it up I received an apology and told it hadn't been received by HR.. It's now been about 6 months and still not resolved.'

Participant 5096, Constable



'I had minimal contact with my line managers whilst on maternity, and although they were trying to 'leave me in peace' to be a mum, having returned to find key decisions were made based on lack of information, I wish they had contacted me to find out any relevant information.'

Stage 3: Return to work

Quantitative findings:

At Stage 3 of the survey participants were asked questions about their experiences of returning to work. Findings showed that the majority of respondents (67%) felt supported by their colleagues but this dropped to 49% when asked about supervisors' support. Only 35% of participants felt their force displayed flexibility towards policies when managing people on mat leave and 57% of respondents disagreed that they had been provided sufficient info in regards to their rights by their force on their return. Furthermore, 57% felt they didn't no where to go in order to raise an issue when returning to work. .

I think my supervisor(s) were supportive when I returned from maternity leave



49% strongly/ somewhat agree
33% strongly/somewhat disagree

I felt supported by my colleagues when I returned from mat leave



67% strongly/ somewhat agree
15% strongly/somewhat disagree

I think my force displays flexibility towards policies when managing people on maternity leave



35% strongly/ somewhat agree
29% strongly/somewhat disagree

I was provided with sufficient info in regard to my rights by my force on my return



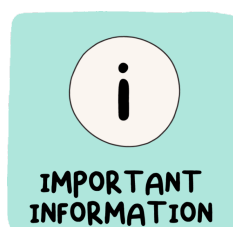
22% strongly/ somewhat agree
57% strongly/somewhat disagree

I knew where to go in order to raise an issue when I returned from maternity leave



43% Yes

57% No



Stage 3: Return to work

Further questions at stage three showed that just over half of respondents felt that as a working mother they were afforded the same professional (56%) and promotion opportunities (51%) with around a third of participants disagreeing with these statements. A total of 77% of respondents thought their career aspirations had changed since returning from mat leave.

As a working mother I am afforded the same professional (CPD and workload) opportunities as my other colleagues



56% strongly/ somewhat agree
28% strongly/somewhat disagree

As a working mother I feel I am afforded the same promotion opportunities as other colleagues



51% strongly/ somewhat agree
30% strongly/somewhat disagree

My career aspirations have changed since returning from maternity leave



77% Yes **34% No**



Stage 3: Return to work

Postnatal Mental Health Support

Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of support for their postnatal mental health when returning from maternity leave. **53% disagreed** with this statement.



I feel like my postnatal mental health was supported when I returned from maternity leave

=

21% strongly/ somewhat agree
53% strongly/somewhat disagree

- Further analysis was examined to explore if there were any significant variables that correlated with the question on postnatal mental health support.

All questions at stage 3 correlated significantly ($p < 0.001$) in a positive direction with postnatal mental health support. The following three variables correlated more strongly, implying a link between the variables listed below and perceptions of postnatal mental health support.

- perceptions of supervisor support = .68**
- provided with sufficient information in regards to rights by the force on RTW = .53**
- force displays flexibility when managing people on mat leave = .49**



Stage 3: Return to work

A small image of a corkboard with a note pinned to it. The note is white with black text that reads "Your feedback matters!". The corkboard is brown and has two orange pushpins holding the note in place.

Qualitative Findings: Experiences of returning to work

- Participants were asked to comment on their experiences when returning to work. The following main themes emerged from the feedback gathered:
- **Mental Health:** When returning to work, many participants discussed mental health issues. There was mention of a lack of support from the organisation and line managers in assisting them in returning to work, which caused stress and anxiety. Other issues mentioned included postnatal depression and feeling forgotten and overwhelmed when they returned to work.
- **Lottery of support from supervisors:** many respondents commented on the minimal support they had from supervisors in returning to work and that their experience was highly dependent on their supervisor. Often no meetings were arranged and poor communication was cited between supervisor and participants.
- **Lack of procedural support and opportunities:** this referred to a lack of understanding about maternity entitlements and participants feeling they weren't kept informed or information wasn't easily accessible to them. They also discussed how they felt they had to fight to find out opportunities for CPD or promotion especially when on a flexible working pattern. Some participants stated that they didn't feel their career aspirations had changed but due to the nature of being a working mother in the police it was "no longer practical to follow these aspirations".
- **Maternity knowledge gap:** this was highlighted by participants in relation to a lack of knowledge from both the organisation and supervisors about maternal health such as breastfeeding, physical health, perinatal mental health, separation anxiety, as well as a 'stigma' or 'resentment' associated with being a working mum and becoming a flexible or part time worker and juggling childcare responsibilities.

Stage 3: Returning to work

Freetexts comments

'I felt like I was expected to hit the ground running & be back fully operational extremely quickly. There was very little understanding re separation anxiety, breastfeeding etc & the general assumption was that I wouldn't want to be at work and wasn't as valuable as my colleagues' -
Participant 56, Sergeant

'Supervisors weren't aware of my return date, my line manager had left during my maternity leave and so when I returned I didn't have one and didn't have one for a number of weeks, I didn't know who to go to. I didn't have the proper equipment to do my role.' - *Participant 576, Police Staff*

'Its hard returning from mat leave especially if you work part time. I don't feel like my colleagues value me as much and often think I'm not pulling my weight as I cant complete the work load they do working full time.' - *Participant 5291, Constable*

'I found it very difficult to find a role when I returned from maternity, as no-one wanted a part-time sergeant'-
Participant 1966, Sergeant



'I felt lost about returning and seeking help. i felt that i would be made out to be difficult and obstructive, which happened.' -
Participant 745, Sergeant

'Advised line manager I was diagnosed with post natal depression and anxiety, for which I was still receiving treatment for when I returned to work. No referral to Occ Health made, had no support for my mental health. Supervisor has never even mentioned it to me again.'- *Participant 5472, Constable*

'I was given keys on my first day of returning and told to get out there. I had started a new shift and station and just been off 6months with 12 months off shift - i went home and cried. I had no support and felt like I was useless. I also told the Insp I was on medication for post natal depression and he said that was no ones issue but my own. Thinking back I don't know why I didn't leave.'
Participant 1981, Constable

'The only reason i knew what to do regarding maternity leave or to get back to ops was because i had colleagues i could ring throughout my pregnancy.' -
Participant 1916, Constable

'There is nothing in place to inform people of vacancies or promotions and there can be a massive disparity between what support is provided depending on who you manager is.'-
Participant 46, Police Staff

Further Analysis

Stage 1: Support during pregnancy

- Regression analysis was undertaken and an outcome measure was created assessing the extent to which an individual felt they had been supported during their pregnancy This included five measures:

- **During pregnancy placed in a role of value**
- **Treated fairly by supervisor during pregnancy**
- **Treated fairly by colleagues during pregnancy**
- **Supervisor support during pregnancy**
- **Colleagues support during pregnancy**



- These five measures were shown to have high internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha $\alpha=0.86$) - meaning they can be considered to be reliably testing what they sought to test (Statology, 2020)
- Three factors were found to be statistically significant:

1) DISABILITY:

If a person stated that they had a disability, they were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with their support during pregnancy

2) LENGTH OF SERVICE:

For respondents, length of service was associated with perceptions of support during pregnancy such that as length of service increased people were more satisfied with the levels of support

3) POLICE OFFICERS VS STAFF


Increased dissatisfaction with the support offered during pregnancy was significantly more likely to be found with police officers in comparison to police staff.



*The final model used in the regression analysis was able to explain and predict around 22% of the variation observed in the data. This means that 22% of the differences or changes in the outcome measure can be attributed to the significant factors included in the model. Moreover, it's important to note that this result was not due to chance, as indicated by the statistically significant p-value (less than 0.001).

Further Analysis

Stage 2 & 3: Support after pregnancy & returning to work

- Regression analysis was undertaken and an additional outcome measure was created that assessed the perceptions of participants' support after pregnancy and when returning to work. This included five measures:
 - **Good work life balance when returning from maternity leave**
 - **Postnatal mental health when returning from maternity leave**
 - **Supervisor support when returning from maternity leave**
 - **Supervisor treatment when returning from maternity leave**
 - **Colleague support when returning from maternity leave**
- 
- These five measures were shown to have high internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha $\alpha=0.82$) - meaning they can be considered to be reliably testing what they sought to test (Statology, 2020)
 - Three factors were found to be statistically significant:

1) FORCE DISPLAYING FLEXIBILITY TOWARDS POLICIES WHEN MANAGING PEOPLE ON MAT LEAVE:

is positively associated with the outcome measure, such that as people agree with this statement, they will have a higher positive measure on the outcome score (5 measures above)

2) COLLEAGUES SUPPORT WHEN PREGNANT:

The same as above, so if respondents agreed that their colleagues were supportive they will have a higher positive score on the outcome measure

3) I KNEW WHERE TO GO IN ORDER TO RAISE AN ISSUE

Again, if participants agreed with this statement it leads to higher and more positive scores on the outcome measure.



*The final model used in the regression analysis was able to explain and predict around 40% of the variation observed in the data. This means that 40% of the differences or changes in the outcome measure can be attributed to the significant factors included in the model. Moreover, it's important to note that this result was not due to chance, as indicated by the statistically significant p-value (less than 0.001).

Thematic Analysis

Given your personal experience, what advice would you give your force, in order to improve the experience of others in the future



Participants were asked the above question as part of the survey. A total of **3183** respondents provided feedback to this question. Thematic analysis was then carried out to see what findings could be gathered in order to help police organisations improve the experience of maternity leave for others in the future. Several key themes were identified and discussed below:

1. Supportive Return Process

Many participants talked about how valuable it would be to have certain support mechanisms in place to help them return positively back to work. This included considering:

- **phased returns**
- **maternity pack/return to work toolkit**
- **refresher training** especially for officers in which many felt that they had "lost confidence", skills and legislative knowledge after a significant time period off
- **buddy support** where they could be paired up or shadow someone for a short period of time following maternity leave
- **access to peer support networks/groups/lived experience advisors** where they could gain support from others going through the same process of returning to work or advice from those who had been through it
- **mentor/coaching and career development sessions** to help support mothers in "rebuilding confidence" and provide opportunities for returning mothers to 'still continue in their career paths'.
- **valuable meetings with manager and valuable KIT days** - if a meeting was carried out during pregnancy and before maternity leave, that was thought of value, participants felt this helped them to return to work (RTW) more successfully. They also discussed that when KIT days were taken and valuably used they were also helpful to the return to work process. However often participants weren't aware of KIT days existence or they were done as a "tick box" and as such didn't help to support mothers in RTW.



'KIT days are vital to make the return to work less daunting'

"There is nothing in place to support mothers integrate back into working life, i.e, phased return. I believe there should be a period of almost 'mentoring' in order to feel fully up to date with any changes in processes etc.'

'a network of peer supporters that could be available to those on maternity leave'



Thematic Analysis continued..

Given your personal experience, what advice would you give your force, in order to improve the experience of others in the future



2. Supervisory Support & Training

A large proportion of participants felt that supervisors and line managers should be given more training and guidance on how to support employees when they are pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning to work. Many participants discussed how supervisors lacked knowledge of maternity issues as well as policies and procedures, resulting in numerous inconsistencies in the advice and support provided to mothers. Participants also felt that a meeting before maternity leave should be mandatory, as they believed it would help supervisors stay in touch with staff during their time away and help women on maternity leave not feel "forgotten."

Overall, there was a lot of evidence to suggest that there is still a long way to go in terms of improving supervisors' communication and support for women on maternity leave, with many respondents describing it as a 'lottery' but also highlighting how integral the support was to their experience if they had it. .



"More training to managers to empower them to make the right decisions around support"

'Line managers to be trained in handling pregnant women with more compassion and understanding.'

'Women who are on mat leave often get forgotten about'

"during this fragile time of our lives away from our babies, we need support.. managers of all levels need training and awareness around the challenges faced by returning mothers..."

'My supervisor was very supportive, however this was down to the individual and the flexibility he gave me. This was not the support from the force in general'



Thematic Analysis continued..

Given your personal experience, what advice would you give your force, in order to improve the experience of others in the future



3. Informed on maternal health

Participants expressed concern about a lack of understanding about specific maternal health issues. This included, but was not limited to, postpartum depression, postnatal depression, perinatal mental health, breastfeeding, birth trauma, awareness of baby loss and miscarriage, anxiety and stress, and so on.

This also included more physical and environmental issues such as birth delivery and the impact on the body, breastfeeding whilst at work, fitness tests, uniform fitting during pregnancy and upon returning to work, pelvic floor issues, back pain, fatigue etc.

As a result, they felt that supervisors, colleagues, and the organisation as a whole needed to be better informed about these challenges and what it might mean for women during their maternity journey.



'That women can suffer from Post natal depression whilst on maternity and that there should be some sort of help when they return to work'

'More awareness around the mental health impact that being pregnant can have on staff, as well as the physical elements''

'appointment with uniform to make sure kit fits'

'to not make women feel like breastfeeding needs to stop to return to work'



Thematic Analysis continued..

Given your personal experience, what advice would you give your force, in order to improve the experience of others in the future



4. Clearer policies, procedures, and support processes

A more informed central HR team that is easy to contact, clearer guidance and toolkits for mothers, information made easily accessible and more inclusive (especially when someone is off on mat leave and may not have easy access to intranet or work folders). A named contact either on their team or in HR where guidance could be sought. More active and visible support networks or processes to support mothers in place that are actively working and not just there as a tick box exercise.

Many discussed that a buddy scheme was a good idea but didn't always work out which left them more frustrated. The same was around support networks in which mothers ended leading these initiatives themselves and joining groups through social media or unofficial channels like WhatsApp groups which they subsequently found really useful. This theme also included having clearer and more supportive policies in place (e.g. paternity and shared parental leave) to support fathers and partners which in turn could help to support mothers.



'I think structured guidance should be provided to supervision there was a lot of back and forth with HR and managers'

'support for fathers, the 'paternity' leave situation whilst improved, is still not working. The policies are poorly written and confusing. The reality is that one parent is always missing out because of the financial strain on parents'

'Listen and have some humanity when dealing with staff. We are not just a number. Ensure that the process of requesting flexible/part time working is being followed correctly to ensure that no-one is over or under paid or at least that we need to be mindful that this can happen and what to do if it does. Explain how going on maternity leave and being part time can affect your pension. I have absolutely no idea and have no confidence that the final figure I get will be correct and there's nothing I can do about it.'



Thematic Analysis continued..

Given your personal experience, what advice would you give your force, in order to improve the experience of others in the future



5. Tailored approach

This theme incorporates comments from participants discussing how being treated on an individual basis, having personalised communication with their managers as well as an allowance for treating individuals with flexibility would have helped provide a more supportive and positive environment for mothers during their maternity leave process. In particular many participants mentioned that communication should be two-way, so not just initiated by the mother but also by the supervisor and or the organisation to help them feel more included and supported during the process.



"Each maternity case should be treated individually and consideration given to the personal circumstances of the employee both at home and work. Supervisors should have the training and feel supported to deal with the employee as an individual and make decisions that are in the best interest of the employee and the force. Conversations are required to understand these needs as some employees will require more support than others"

"On return, an effort should be made with the individuals to make them aware of their entitlements, and rights and a general welfare conversation should take place"

"Keeping in touch during maternity leave is a two way process - managers need to reach out to staff not just expecting the parent to make contact with their workplace"

"More check ins - tailored to the individual"

"better communication with individuals"



Thematic Analysis continued..

Given your personal experience, what advice would you give your force, in order to improve the experience of others in the future



6. Conscious of maternity bias- ending the motherhood penalty

Issues of maternity bias were apparent in 30%* of the participants free text responses. Many felt that supervisors, colleagues, and the organisation made wrong assumptions about what mothers wanted or how it would impact their performance at work. The issue of being stereotyped especially in relation to being a flexible worker was discussed regularly.

'My Insp at the time also made it clear that when I was part time 38hrs a week, he disapproved stating that mums should stay at home and look after the children, that's what his wife did.'

'Ask what the individual wants as opposed to how the Force wants to manage "mothers". Do not assume'

'As a flexible worker upon my return to work from maternity leave I feel as though I have taken a step back in relation to career aspirations and as a result my mental health has suffered greatly. In the most part, this is due to poor supervisors (first and second line manager levels) and bad leadership, in my opinion'

'Stop prioritising long hours, heavy workloads, projects and absolute commitment to work. You might find people with a stronger work life balance actually do just as good and sometimes better a job than those that crowbar a home life around a busy and demanding professional existence.'

'Have something in place which means that your exam is extended if you have passed but are on mat leave. Promote job sharing and flexi-working in some of the more inflexible roles.'



*Of all survey free text responses



Discussion

The research set out to increase our knowledge of maternity experiences within policing. This was the largest survey carried out on this topic in the public sector to date, with the number of responses far surpassing our expectations. Responses have provided the team with a wealth of both quantitative and qualitative data.

To summarise, the key findings are listed below.



Stage 1: pregnancy

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>In stage 1 a large majority of respondents were positive about the treatment and support they had from their supervisors and colleagues. However, more than half of respondents didn't have a meeting with their manager prior to going on leave, and if they did have a meeting only a third found it of value.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Regression analysis showed that if a respondent stated they had a disability, had less time in service, and were a police officer they were significantly more likely to be dissatisfied with the overall support provided during their pregnancy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Perceptions of mental health support during pregnancy were also lower, with only one-third (32%) of participants agreeing that the force supported their mental health during their pregnancy. According to the correlations, mental health support has a significant relationship with supervisor and colleague support, and a valuable pre-leave meeting before going on maternity leave. This emphasises the importance of adequate support from supervisors and colleagues, as well as a valuable pre-meeting prior to going on maternity leave, to help pregnant women feel more supported with their mental health.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>The data for stage 1 pregnancy is further reinforced by the qualitative findings suggesting that police forces need to improve in several areas to help women feel more supported throughout their pregnancy. Feedback indicates that meetings with supervisors prior to maternity leave were inconsistent, mental health was not considered, supervisor support was described as a lottery, and many respondents felt isolated at work during their pregnancy.</p>



Discussion continued...

Stage 2: Maternity Leave



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>52% of respondents stated they had regular contact with their manager whilst on maternity leave and if they did have contact only 50% felt it was of value. Yet 77% of participants would have liked to have been contacted every 1-3 months.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Just over half (55%) of participants took KIT days but when they did take them 71% of respondents agreed they were of value.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>77% of participants stated they requested a flexible working request whilst on maternity leave however, only 42% of the sample agreed that there were given ample opportunity to discuss this request with their manager before returning to work and 20% of the sample had to wait over three months to have their request authorised.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Again, the data is supported through qualitative feedback which suggests that there is a lack of contact and lack of knowledge from supervisors leading to feeling like participants weren't kept informed of significant information and promotion opportunities, or informed on maternity-related entitlements such as KIT days whilst they were on maternity leave.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Mental health support in this period was related to respondents feeling unsupported by the organisation in understanding mental health - especially in relation to maternal health. There were also many comments about the stress and anxiety caused by applying for flexible working while on maternity leave. This could be linked to the issue that it took many respondents between 2-3 months plus to have their flexible working request authorised.</p>



Discussion continued...

Stage 3: Return to work



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>The experiences of returning to work showed that the majority of respondents felt supported by colleagues but this dropped to 49% when asked of supervisors support- in contrast to 73% during the pregnancy stage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Only 43% of respondents knew where to go in order to raise an issue on returning from maternity and 57% felt they were not provided with sufficient information regarding their rights on return to their organisation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Only 21% of respondents felt their postnatal mental health was supported when they returned from maternity leave with 53% disagreeing with this statement.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>A regression analysis of participants' perceptions of support after pregnancy and when returning to work revealed three statistically significant factors, indicating that they have a significant impact on overall perceptions of how supported participants felt: 1) the force displaying flexibility towards policies when managing people on maternity leave, 2) colleagues' support during pregnancy, and 3) knowing where to go to raise an issue.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>This data is further enhanced by qualitative findings indicating that participants felt again that mental health is not considered carefully enough by supervisors and the organisation when returning to work, that there is a lottery of support from supervisors in that if you have a supportive and informed supervisor your experience of returning to work is much more positive. There was a distinct lack of procedural support and opportunities in place for those returning and respondents felt there was a knowledge gap from the organisation, supervisors and HR in relation to both postnatal mental and physical health.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<p>Significant correlations also revealed that post-natal mental health has a significant relationship with perceptions of supervisor support, being provided with sufficient information about rights, and the force displaying flexibility when managing people on maternity leave. Thus, suggesting these factors could be instrumental in helping working mothers feel supported in their post-natal mental health when returning to work.</p>



Discussion continued...

Freetext Analysis



When participants were asked what they felt forces needed to do in order to improve the experience of others in the future several key themes were discovered.

- 1) **a supportive return process** which includes considering phased returns, refresher training, active peer support networks, buddy and parenting champion schemes, maternity toolkits, coaching, a valuable meeting with line managers and valuable KIT days, etc
- 2) **Improve supervisory support and training** to enable managers to provide a more supportive environment to women throughout their maternity journey, as well as empower them to use supportive policies such as flexible working, agile requests, and other entitlements.
- 3) **being more informed on maternal health issues** including both mental and physical health. This included issues such as perinatal mental health, postnatal depression, stress, anxiety, sleep deprivation, breastfeeding , uniform fitting after birth, different birth choices, pelvic floor issues, back pain etc
- 4) **adopting a tailored approach** which allows for women to be treated on an individual basis and provides flexibility in support.
- 5) **ending the motherhood penalty** by exposing and dealing with maternity bias and unhelpful, stereotyped assumptions within the organisation which was apparent in 30% of the freetext comments. This is also linked to both better supervisory training and being more informed on maternal health issues in which many respondents highlighted may help alleviate some of the biases they have faced during their maternity journey.
- 6) **clearer and more supportive polices, procedures and peer support networks** which are inclusive, accessible, flexible and up to date to allow for the retention of working mothers.

Limitations



Before considering potential implications of this research it is important to highlight any methodological limitations. While these are often expected in any research project, it is important to consider them when interpreting the findings.

Potential limitations of this study is that the survey relied on self reporting which could be subject to various biases and a large proportion of respondents took maternity leave more than 5 years ago. While it is important to capture lived experiences of those at any time, there is a limitation that things may have changed in recent years and thus those experiences do not represent the current state within police organisations. However, the recentness of maternity leave was examined throughout both the quantitative and qualitative analyses, and no significant differences were discovered. As a result, we feel comfortable suggesting that our findings are relevant across all time periods of maternity leave.

Recommendations



Examining maternity experiences in policing has given us a significant insight into the state of play and supports the notion that police organisations must transform working practices around embracing and supporting motherhood if they wish to retain their much longed-for and much-needed diversified workforce.

Several recommendations are proposed:

- Those who identify as **disabled, have less time in service, and are police officers** may be more vulnerable to perceiving their support as poorer from the organisation during pregnancy. **When evaluating the support provided by forces, these factors should be considered.**
- Pregnancy mental health is related to perceptions of support from supervisors and colleagues, as well as perceptions of a valuable pre-leave meeting with supervisors. It is therefore **critical that organisations assess the level of support provided by colleagues and supervisors and provide pregnant women with a valuable pre-leave meeting** that discusses what level of support, contact and communication is wanted during their maternity leave.
- **Mental health considerations, consistency of meetings with supervisors, and more educated and tailored individual support from supervisors and colleagues** are required to ensure pregnant women do not feel isolated at this stage.
- During maternity leave, **agreed communication should be in place that is two-way** to ensure women on maternity leave do not feel ‘forgotten’ by their organisation. **Opportunities should be provided that allow for the discussion of financial provisions, flexible working requests, KIT days, and other maternity-related entitlements.**
- **Organisations should also prioritise reviewing the processes in place for employees to request flexible working requests** to ensure they are handled in a timely manner and do not add to additional stress and anxiety during the leave period.
- To help support those on maternity leave and when returning to work organisations should not underestimate the importance of **displaying flexibility towards policies, colleagues support and providing accessible information that ensures people know where to go if they need to raise any issues.** These three factors are significant in making women feel more supported during their maternity leave and return to work journey.

Recommendations...



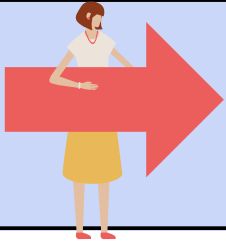
- It is **critical for organisations to be aware of their own maternal biases** in order to avoid making incorrect assumptions and reinforcing stigmas about a mother's performance, willingness for promotions, professional opportunities, flexible and part-time work, and so on. At the same time, **working mothers should be protected by the organisation so that they are not penalised for motherhood** and have access to the same professional and advancement opportunities as others.
- **More education and training for the organisation, managers/supervisors and HR professionals around maternity-related and family entitlements and post-natal mental health and maternal health** (including but not limited to breastfeeding, pregnancy loss, different birth outcomes, birth trauma, perinatal mental health and associated conditions, adoption and physical issues etc), should also be considered a priority across all stages of the maternity journey.
- Ensuring there is a **supportive return process in place** that may include toolkits, phased returns, well-being checks, refresher training, coaching and mentoring support, access to active support networks and valuable meetings with managers and KIT days. These are **crucial elements discussed that can help the return to work process become more supportive**.
- Organisations should assess whether their **current policies and procedures are fit for purpose and in accordance with one another**. That they are there to **support working mothers, including having inclusive policies in place to support fathers and partners, and that information is made accessible to all**. For example, if someone is on maternity, organisations need to think about ways in which women and partners can access this material without necessarily the need to access police computer systems.
- The **NPCC (2021) have issued detailed guidance on police family support** which includes information on fertility, baby loss and miscarriage, pregnancy, parental leave and family support and perinatal mental health. It is worth organisations being aware of this guidance as it provides a wealth of information and support based on best practice across police forces.
- Finally, we are aware of many good practices within police organisations to try to implement some of these changes, which is encouraging to hear. However, we **urge organisations to ensure that these initiatives are properly monitored and evaluated to ensure that they are working effectively**. For example, initiatives such as the buddy system, in which pregnant women are assigned a buddy throughout their journey, have been lauded as great initiatives, but when not adequately resourced, can have a negative impact on women's trust and confidence in the organisation in supporting them throughout their maternity journey.



Next Steps

- Report shared and publicised widely and recommendations discussed
- Opportunities for presenting on this work or offering further advice in next steps for forces nationwide available
- Look at opportunities for knowledge exchange/ co-creation workshops with forces nationally to look at best practices across police organisations and beyond. To include HR, maternity reps, lived experiences and policy/mental health experts etc to work on producing some tangible outputs for forces going forward
- Academic Paper
- Commitment from lead/interested forces going forward to improve maternity experiences (have commitment from GMP in perinatal space)
- Engagement with Union groups, NPCC guidance, support groups and College of Policing to ensure we are all aligned
- Blog posts with policing insight and going equipped to promote the findings wider (Recent blog post [here](#))
- Conference papers and presentations to be carried out where possible
- Future research ideas discussed with internal and external colleagues and funding opportunities explored





Terms Explained

P Values (e.g. $p < 0.05$) :

When the p-value is less than 0.05, it means that the evidence you have is unlikely to occur by chance alone if something is not true. In other words, there is a relatively low probability that the observed results could happen purely due to random variability. This suggests that there may be a meaningful relationship or effect present. However, it's important to note that p-values alone do not provide a definitive conclusion and should be interpreted in conjunction with other factors and context.

Regression analysis:

Regression analysis is a method used to find the relationship between two things. For example, it can help us understand how the price of a house is influenced by its size. By analysing data, regression analysis helps us predict and quantify the impact of one variable on another. It's a useful tool for understanding relationships and making predictions.

Thematic analysis:

Thematic analysis is a way to analyse qualitative data, like interviews or open-ended survey responses. It involves identifying and organising themes or patterns within the data to gain insights. It helps us understand the main ideas or topics that emerge from the information. In essence, thematic analysis is a method of finding and categorising recurring themes in qualitative data to uncover meaningful patterns and understand the underlying meaning.

Correlation analysis:

Correlation analysis is a method used to measure the relationship between two variables. It helps us understand how changes in one variable are related to changes in another variable. In simpler terms, correlation analysis tells us whether two things tend to move together or in opposite directions. It quantifies the strength and direction of the relationship, ranging from a perfect positive correlation (both variables increase together) to a perfect negative correlation (one variable increases while the other decreases). Correlation analysis is helpful in identifying associations and patterns in data, allowing us to assess the degree of connection between variables.

References



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Signposting

After reading this report should you wish to seek further support or guidance we would recommend the below organisations and charities



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