

POLICE FEDERATION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



POLICE REMUNERATION REVIEW BODY SUBMISSION

MARCH 2022

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the evidence presented, and the prevailing economic, political and policing environment, the PFNI set out the following recommendations to the PRRB for the 2022/23 review of police pay, terms and conditions.

Recommendation 1

That a full stocktake is urgently undertaken to provide clarity on how the pay review process is currently operating in NI, including how and where backlogs are being created and where improvements to expediate this process can be made.

Recommendation 2

An uplift of 5.5% to the annual salaries of all federated officers in the PSNI, as payable from September 2022.

Recommendation 3

That the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) should continue to be uplifted in line with the pay award.

Recommendation 4

That the Dog Handlers' Allowance is uplifted in line with the annual pay increase provided to PSNI officers. If no pay award is to be recommended, or a recommended pay award falls significantly below the level of inflation, the Dog Handlers' Allowance should be uprated in line with inflation.

Recommendation 5

Notwithstanding the particulars regarding the transition away from CRTP, that the Unsocial Hours Allowance must be implemented immediately within the PSNI, in place of CRTP.

Recommendation 6

That the Hertfordshire Agreement used by the PSNI to determine the conditions and entitlements of officers deployed as mutual aid support is abolished and replaced with a system which mirrors the allowances provided to officers in England and Wales.

Recommendation 7

That the Standby Allowance currently utilised by the PSNI as payment to an officer who sleeps at a place of duty away from their private residence under authorisation to be immediately available for duty if required in an emergency, is abolished and replaced with the Away from Home Overnight Allowance, currently valued at £50 per night, as used in England and Wales.

Recommendation 8

That the 'held in reserve' definition to be used to determine the eligibility of officers for the Away from Home Overnight Allowance includes 'an officer who is serving away from his/her normal place of duty and is required to stay in a particular, specified place rather than being allowed to return home by reason of the need to be ready for immediate deployment' alongside provisions for officers who are unable to return home for practical reasons due to geography/location.

Recommendation 9

That the out-of-date criteria currently utilised in determining the applicability of the 'Hardship Allowance' and the definition of 'proper' and 'higher' sleeping accommodation by the PSNI is modernised and brought into line with that currently used by all forces in England and Wales.

Recommendation 10

That as and when improvements are made to the mutual aid allowances in England and Wales, these should automatically apply to the provisions within the PSNI.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This is the eighth annual written report submitted by the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB). It has been prepared as evidence for the 2022/23 review of the pay, terms and conditions of police officers serving within the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The contents of this submission have been made with reference to the remit letter published by the Minister for Justice (Northern Ireland) Naomi Long MLA, dated 24th January 2022 (See Appendix A) and the remit letter published by the Home Secretary, Priti Patel MP, dated 2nd December 2021 (See Appendix B).
- 1.2. The previous seven reports produced by the PFNI provide, in great detail, information on what we believe are the key issues within policing in Northern Ireland (NI) at the time. This report should be considered as supplementary to these details and does not seek to replicate the information previously provided nor the commentary, but rather provides an updated position on these key issues.
- 1.3. Over the last eight years the PFNI have been explicit in our concerns relating to policing in NI, the problems with the pay review process, the impact of political decisions on policing budgets and contrived debates relating to ‘affordability’ as well as issues associated with officer headcount, demand, health and wellbeing, and morale and motivation. Our eighth report to the PRRB remains burdened by these recurring concerns, a lack of foresight and a wider political environment which has continued to prevent improvement in these areas. The long-term and on-going nature of these issues, which have in more recent years been compounded by complexities associated with global and national issues such as Covid-19 and Brexit, have resulted in policing in NI facing a ‘perfect storm’ at the current time. The PFNI believe that policing is now at the crisis point we have been warning about for some years and that appropriate and tangible steps are now necessary to address the very real and valid concerns of serving officers and staff associations.
- 1.4. The PFNI have previously referenced the issue of the value in policing, and this continues to run through current debates regarding the future of policing in relation to budget concerns, pay, terms and conditions of police officers and discussions on what we, as a society, want and expect our police service to do. The culmination of events over the last number of years has undoubtedly increased the importance of this discussion within policing, in particular considering the impact of the lack of prioritisation of police officers as part of the Covid-19 vaccination programme and the increased media and political scrutiny of policing.
- 1.5. The data provided throughout this report, including the primary data gathered as part of the 2021 PFNI Workforce Survey, provides an insight into the realities of the ‘perfect

storm' facing policing, including evidence of a deeply dissatisfied workforce who are not only dealing with the everyday realities of what it is to be a police officer, but also with the disillusionment associated with the lack of value attached to their role as public protectors, the implications of a workforce which is increasingly 'managed' rather than 'led' and of a decade of pay decline which is being further exacerbated within the current economic climate. 88% of respondents to the 2021 PFNI Survey disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are fairly paid considering the stresses and strains of their job; 34% worry about their personal finances every day or almost every day; 61% reported that the policing of various high-profile events had a negative or very negative effect on how they feel about being a police officer; 89% reported low service wide morale and 60% reported low personal morale; 80% disagreed or strongly disagreed that members of the PSNI are respected by society, whilst 75% disagreed that they feel valued by the PSNI and 57% of respondents would not recommend joining the police to others.

- 1.6. What is clear from the evidence presented and the range of issues facing policing is that the causes of the 'perfect storm' are multifaceted and complex, and whilst some solutions are more difficult to establish, others are much more straightforward. The PFNI strongly believe that this pay review process, how it operates and what it delivers are key parts of a solution which provide an opportunity to address a number of the very real and valid concerns officers currently have, as well as re-balancing some of the disillusionment regarding the value attached to their public duty and beginning to rebuild trust in the political management of policing.

2. STRUCTURE OF SUBMISSION

2.1. The remaining sections of this submission are structured as follows:

Part 3 – Updated commentary on the broad political and policing environment which continues to have direct implications for the pay, terms and conditions of police officers serving in NI. This includes commentary on the pay review process, the remit letter and the issue of political decision making in relation to the PSNI budget.

Part 4 – Updated commentary and data relating to the current working environment facing PSNI officers. This includes a discussion of the ongoing impact of Brexit related community tensions, the impact of Covid-19, police officer numbers, demand and sickness within the PSNI, alongside a consideration of the key factors influencing morale and organisational commitment within the PSNI.

Part 5 – Updated economic commentary reflecting the economic situation in the UK and NI, referencing where possible pre-Covid-19 as a baseline measure, alongside an analysis of the changing value of police officer pay and the impact of soaring inflation.

Part 6 – Reference charts and tables providing a detailed breakdown of the key data referenced throughout the submission.

Please see the appended PFNI 2021 Workforce Survey report for full access to all survey results.

3. THE POLICING ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1. As a core public service, it is not unexpected that policing is impacted by the wider political environment. However, national and local political events and decision making have, in recent years, caused much consternation within policing and have had direct and ongoing consequences for the pay, terms and conditions of serving police officers in the UK and NI. This section of our submission provides updated commentary on two key aspects of policing which are deeply impacted by political decision making, namely the pay review process and associated remit letters and the setting of the PSNI budget.

Pay Review Process

- 3.2. It is exasperating that eight years since the inception of an evidence based, independent pay review process the PFNI feel compelled to open each submission with comments on *the* process, rather than immediately addressing the evidence requirements for the coming review round. However, such is the level of disquiet about the workings of the police remuneration review process we are *again* forced to highlight our concerns regarding how this process is currently operating (both nationally and at the local level) as well as identifying the very real points of contention which remain alongside those which appear to be worsening.
- 3.3. This pay review process is the *only* process by which police officers' pay, terms and conditions are 'independently' considered and as such it forms a core component of the overall policing environment. The manner in which the pay review process has played out since 2014 has had the very real effect of damaging morale and motivation within policing, as well as confidence in the very system officers rely upon to fairly and independently assess their pay, terms and conditions. These concerns feature as a significant part of the 'perfect storm' which we believe is currently facing policing.
- 3.4. The failings of the pay review process between 2014 and 2020 have been outlined in our previous submissions, and as the aim here is to update rather than re-hash the concerns from previous years, this commentary will focus on the impact of the most recent pay review round. However, this should not lessen the cumulative effect of a system which over eight consecutive years appears to the remit group, to lack independence and impartiality.
- 3.5. The problems with the police pay review process were particularly evident during the 2021/22 review round when the PRRB were *once again* prevented from operating as an independent body. The restrictions placed on the process in 2021/22 highlighted for many the futility of a process which is only enabled to perform its independent function when it is politically expedient to do so. Far from the outcomes of a process which evidence the need for a fair and warranted pay award, the 2021/22 review of police pay provided little else than disappointment, frustration, anger and disillusionment

amongst our members. This was compounded by the lengths our officers went to during the year to protect life, whilst risking their own, against the backdrop of a deadly virus, while other key public services were publicly thanked.

- 3.6. We re-state the following every year and whilst the significance of the point never dwindles, it appears as though the point fails to be fully recognised for its importance. Police officers, unlike other public sector workers, are *unable* to join a union or take industrial action, and therefore see a greater need than other public sector groups to ensure that deliberations on issues directly affecting them are impartial, balanced and unprejudiced. This is fundamental to the operation of this pay review process and must be upheld at every challenge.
- 3.7. The PFNI can see the merit in a pay review process which enables all key policing stakeholders the opportunity to engage equally and directly with the process through the provision of robust evidence. However, the persistent shortcomings of this system have eroded trust in this process to such a point that the PFNI retain the right to disengage entirely from it if it cannot be directly evidenced *this year and beyond* that the process is indeed fully independent and operating as such.
- 3.8. At a local level, the pay review process in NI continues to suffer from a range of additional issues, which when combined with the broader concerns regarding the operation of the pay review process nationally, has a further negative effect on the remit group. The provision of this evidence-based report in NI has become increasingly difficult as the outworkings of each annual review in NI have become fragmented, increasingly delayed and seemingly more and more cumbersome to rectify. Each report we produce is now bogged down in recommendations previously made but not yet enacted, reports completed but not yet published, decisions made but not yet publicised and on agreements on elements of recommendations but not on others. As each year passes this process and its outworkings grind slower, increasing the difficulty of presenting coherent arguments on issues of pay, when previous discussions have not been completed and agreements not implemented.
- 3.9. The following information is provided as a summary of some of the issues which have arisen following recommendations made by the PRRB relating to issues of pay for police officers in NI over the last number of years:

Year	PRRB Recommendation	NI Outcome	Delay
2019/20	A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officer pay points for all ranks – from September 2019	Delayed until February 2020	6 months

	An increase of 2.5% in the current level of the NITA – from September 2019	Delayed until February 2020	6 months
	Dog Handlers Allowance should increase by 2.5% - from September 2019	Delayed until February 2020	6 months
2020/21	Removal of the lowest point on the Sergeants’ pay scale – from September 2020	Delayed until January 2022	17 months
	A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officer pay points for all ranks – from September 2020	Delayed until December 2020	4 months
	An increase of 2.5% in the current level of NITA – from September 2020	Delayed until December 2020	4 months
	Dog Handlers Allowance should increase by 2.5% - from September 2020	Delayed until December 2020	4 months
2021/22	Pay point 0 of the Constable pay scale is uplifted by £250 – from September 2021	March 2022 – remains outstanding	On-going for 7 months
	A 1% increase in the NITA for all police officers – from September 2021	March 2022 – remains outstanding	On-going for 7 months
Contractual, incremental payments - from September 2021		March 2022 – remains outstanding	On-going for 7 months

3.10. When presented in summary, the scale and frequency of the issue becomes clear, whilst also highlighting that the problem has been progressively deteriorating each year. If these issues were occurring in relation to the pay of police officers in England and Wales there would rightly be uproar, however it appears that police officers in NI are simply supposed to show patience. Unfortunately, patience is not a legally accepted form of tender in NI and cannot be used to pay bills or acquire credit, it also has little impact on improving the morale or motivation of a deeply dissatisfied workforce.

3.11. Unfathomably this situation worsened during the 2021/22 review round as in addition to the recurring delays in implementing PRRB recommendations, additional delays have emerged in the provision of contractual, incremental payments to officers who attain to the next point on their respective pay scale. This problem has been occurring since September 2021 and impacts an increasing number of officers each day; the latest

data provided by the PSNI identifies that 3,108 officers¹ have so far been affected by this delay.

- 3.12. This has, as one would expect, caused a huge level of anger amongst our members. Results from the 2021 PFNI Workforce Survey identify that the factor most commonly selected by respondents as having a negative effect on their personal morale within the PSNI was the delay in implementing pay increases and/or pay increments, as reported by 92% of respondents, up from 88% in 2018. The PFNI have been inundated with personal stories of hardship owing to these ‘administrative delays’. It must be understood that these delays have real life impacts, including officers who contacted us before Christmas expressing dismay that the money they had been relying upon to get them through the Christmas season was now not available, and others who have had mortgage applications refused as their income has not increased as expected.
- 3.13. Notwithstanding the wider issues associated with the PRRB process, a full stocktake of the process and how it is operating in NI is urgently required to understand how necessary improvements can be made.

Recommendation 1

That a full stocktake is urgently undertaken to provide clarity on how the pay review process is currently operating in NI, including how and where backlogs are being created and where improvements to expedite the process can be made.

The Remit

- 3.14. The PFNI view the annual remit letter as the starting point of each annual review round. This letter is written by the NI Justice Minister, following pre-consultation with relevant policing stakeholders in NI, outlining the key points to be addressed within the upcoming review round. It is our position that this letter sets the parameters within which the review body are to operate each year; notwithstanding the wider PRRB Terms of Reference.
- 3.15. In the 7th report on NI the PRRB state that “...it is disappointing that our remit letter did not ask us to recommend an overall pay award this year, and that the independence of the Review Body process has again been affected²”. However, the PFNI have been made aware that an initial remit letter was submitted by the DoJ in early 2021, which was less pointed in its direction that the review “...will not therefore be seeking a

¹ PSNI Data, 2022 - unpublished

² PRRB, 2021, 7th Report on NI, page 58

recommendation for police officer pay uplifts for 2021/22³". Rather it is our understanding that this initial remit letter provided the review body with room to, at the very least, consider the evidence submitted and make a recommendation on police pay (regardless if this was accepted or rejected by the Minister). We believe that the PRRB subsequently requested amendments to this letter requiring 'clear direction' on the matter. The PFNI understand the difficulties posed in coinciding differing public sector pay policies and remit letters with the issue of pay parity between policing in England, Wales and NI; we too had to grapple with these complexities in the formation of our submission in 2021. However, such behind the scenes interaction does little to instil confidence in the independence of this process, and we believe is an overstep by the review body in seeking amendments to the parameters originally set.

3.16. The 2022/23 NI remit letter was published on the 28th January 2022, eight weeks after the publication of the remit letter for England and Wales. Following the annual call for input into the NI remit letter, the Justice Minister has requested that the following matters are considered as part of the 2022/23 pay review round:

- How to apply the pay award for 2022/23 for all police officers in the PSNI
- The regular elements of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) and Dog Handlers' Allowance
- The appropriateness of considering a locally agreed salary band for the ACC position within the PSNI
- That mutual aid payments and allowances payable to PSNI officers during mutual aid deployments are in line with payments made to other UK police forces.

3.17. Unlike the 2021/22 remit, this years' remit letter *permits* the PRRB to demonstrate their operational independence: a welcome step which the PFNI hope will feature strongly throughout the PRRB's consideration of the evidence provided. In addition, the NI Justice Minister also reconfirmed her position on the on-going maintenance of the principle of pay parity with officers in England and Wales. The PFNI position on this has not altered since our last submission, and despite the potential implications for pay parity arising from the introduction of pay reform in England and Wales, no further commentary is provided owing to a lack of any dialogue or direction on pay reform from within the PSNI.

3.18. Whilst the remit letter also seeks views on the pay scale for Assistant Chief Constables (ACC) in NI, the PFNI will not be providing evidence on this as this group of officers sit outside the scope of our membership. However, we are appreciative of the opportunity

³ Department of Justice, 2nd March 2021, Police Remuneration Review Body Remit for 2021/22

to evidence the implications of the way in which mutual aid payments are applicable to officers in NI relative to their UK counterparts.

- 3.19. We note with interest the reference to ‘operation uplift’ in the England and Wales remit letter and the implied implications this has for a pay award, as noted by the Home Secretary; *“We must ensure that the affordability of a pay award is taken into consideration so that police forces are able to maximise the number of additional officers that they can recruit⁴”*. This is interesting for two reasons, firstly the insinuation that a trade-off between fair pay and additional officers is in any way ‘protecting funding for frontline services’ is appalling, and as previously outlined by the PFNI sets service provision and officer wellbeing against fair and warranted pay. Secondly, when considered within the NI context where current budget discussions produce just one outcome for policing (despite previous political agreements to the contrary) and that is reduced officer headcount, the contrast is stark.
- 3.20. As confirmed by the Justice Minister, the NI public sector pay policy for 2022/23 has not yet been set, however the draft budget provides an indication of how this policy may be shaped. As with the draft budget, the details reveal that this policy will cover a 3-year period from 2022 to 2025. The draft budget follows from the direction set out in the 2021/22 public sector pay policy, where the NI Executive took a different approach from the Treasury in not freezing public sector pay, rather stating that *“The Executive wants to recognise the contribution of public sector staff, and is also mindful of the significant increases in the cost of living⁵”*. In outlining the intention with regards to public sector pay the draft budget states that *“the proposed public sector pay policy for 2022-23 to 2024-25 is a flexible one where there is no overarching limit on awards⁶”*. Whilst currently in draft format, this flexibility was central to last years’ pay policy and should therefore drive deliberations and evidence required for this current pay review round.
- 3.21. As in previous rounds, the PFNI remain resolute in our opposition to the continued requirement for pay increases to be borne from within existing budgets. We have made reference to this issue in each of the last three pay review rounds, pointing to the deep-rooted unfairness and unsustainability of this position which we firmly believe acts as an immediate (and deliberate) impediment to the provision of fair and warranted pay for dedicated and hardworking police officers.

⁴ Priti Patel MP, 2nd December 2021, England and Wales Remit Letter

⁵ Department of Finance, 2021, 2022-2025 Draft Budget, p78

⁶ *ibid*, p79

PSNI Budget

- 3.22. The PFNI have consistently raised concerns about the continued provision of single year budgets for policing in NI. This concern has been echoed by all other policing stakeholders, alongside the PRRB, with reference made to the constraints this places on the development of long-term policing strategies, ending the perpetual cycle of financial uncertainty and implementing a coherent approach on pay and reward. As such the development of a 3-year draft budget was seen as a positive step forward.
- 3.23. However, the basic premise of the 2022-2025 draft budget has been to prioritise the Department of Health, at the expense of all other departments. This cost has been reported as a 2% reduction to the baseline of each department⁷. Whilst the PFNI understand that setting the budget is a political decision, it is worth noting that there is currently no Programme for Government (PfG) against which to measure this prioritisation framework nor to indicate political backing from a five-party Executive.
- 3.24. As noted, the draft budget prioritises health to the detriment of all other departments, despite the Executives' responsibility to adequately fund *all* public services, including policing. Indeed, it appears to the PFNI that this political decision offers no foresight or cross-departmental collaborative thinking, as was the centre of the much-hyped outcome based 2021 draft PfG. The draft PfG recognised the shared outcomes between departments and encouraged the creation of *"...strategies and plans that cut across departments and sectors to tackle societal problems and improve wellbeing for all"*⁸. The draft budget eradicates this potential.
- 3.25. Policing is not a standalone public service, but rather its outcomes feature strongly across public service priorities, directly contributing to two of the four NI Executive Covid Strategy Recovery Pillars i.e., Tackling Inequality and ironically, the Health of the Population⁹. To remove funds in such a dramatic fashion from policing in order to fund health is both counter-intuitive and short-sighted. Policing works in conjunction with other departments, including health, with recent reports of the PSNI responding to 2,156 calls on behalf of the NI Ambulance Service between April and June 2021 alone¹⁰. Furthermore, PSNI data indicates that PSNI officers responded to 4,925 calls for service from children's homes/residential in 2020, increasing to 7,450 in 2021, alongside responding to 128 missing persons from adult care/nursing homes in 2019/20 and 53 in 2020/21 and 2,134 missing persons from hospital settings in 2019/20 and 1,527 in

⁷ Department for Finance, 2021, 2022-2025 Draft Budget

⁸ NI Executive, 2021, Programme for Government (PfG) 2021

⁹ NI Executive, 2021, Building Forward: Consolidated Covid-19 Recovery Plan

¹⁰ Trevor Clarke MLA, 9 December 2021, Ambulance shortage placing more pressure on PSNI

2020/21¹¹. No one is seeking to dispute the importance of health, education and infrastructure for society; however, it is good and effective policing which stabilises the fabric of society to allow these other public services to operate.

3.26. Far from future proofing a key public service, the budget allocations provided to the Department of Justice in the draft budget (of which the PSNI accounts for approximately 80%) would devastate policing in NI. It is anticipated that this would create financial pressures within the PSNI of over £225million over three years, just to standstill¹².

3.27. The proposed budget allocations would put the service on an emergency footing and have a direct impact in the following areas:

- A reduction in officer numbers to 6,027 over the 3-year period (a stark contrast to the 7,500 agreed within the New Decade, New Agreement deal of 2020 and to the £2billion investment in policing and the recruitment of 20,000 “additional” officers in England and Wales). A reduction of this magnitude could take a decade to reverse
- A reduction in the visibility, accessibility and responsiveness of policing in NI
- A reduction in proactive policing services as well as key services to communities such as serious crime investigations
- A reduction in activity in collaborative areas such as within the health and mental health arenas
- A reduction in public confidence
- A direct impact upon modernisation plans
- A reduced capacity to keep people safe

3.28. Despite the fact that this budget remains in draft format, the direct impact of it has already begun to emerge following the deferral of the recruitment of 85 new officers in February and March of this year due to the financial uncertainty posed¹³.

3.29. The commentary on the impact of the three-year draft budget was compiled prior to the collapse of the NI Executive, which has prevented the draft budget from being passed in the NI Assembly. Despite the fact that this budget is no longer an imminent

¹¹ PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

¹² PSNI Data, unpublished

¹³ Julian O’Neill, BBC, 22nd January 2022, PSNI postpones recruitment of 85 officers over finances

reality in NI, we have left the commentary in this report as a stark and very real indicator of the implications of political decision-making on a key public service.

- 3.30. Whilst the PFNI have been vocal about the significant negative implications the draft three-year budget had for policing in NI, the absence of a functioning Executive and the lack of any clear budgetary planning does little to improve the current situation. Whilst the PSNI are no longer facing a £225m deficit over three years, the short-term financial outlook is no more positive, with a very high degree of financial uncertainty over this year and beyond alongside significant and on-going budgetary pressures.

4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

4.1. This section of our submission aims to provide an updated profile of the current NI policing environment. The working environment in which policing operates is directly influenced by a number of external factors, this includes an understanding of the type and scale of direct and derived demand placed on the service, alongside a consideration of how additional societal complexities such as Brexit and Covid-19 have altered demand and complicated the affiliation between policing and the public. These issues feed directly into the internal working environment, where issues of officer numbers correlate with policing response and workload, as evidenced through high levels of overtime working, on-call working, sickness absence and increased levels of low personal morale.

Demand

4.2. The demand on policing in NI remains high. The range of crime and non-crime incidents that the PSNI are required to deal with has not reduced nor has the complexity of the cases that are presented. As previously reported, the PSNI are still faced with the challenging role of 'plugging gaps' in other public services, including mental health provision, providing care for vulnerable people or as already evidenced responding to calls on behalf of the NI Ambulance Service.

4.3. There has been a general upwards trend in the volume of crime incidents (including fraud) recorded by the PSNI since 2012/13 (see Figure 1), increasing from 100,389 recorded incidents to 110,745 incidents in 2019/20. This trend was interrupted in 2020/21 due to Covid-19 restrictions, however despite the on-going impact of Covid-19 throughout 2021/22, early indicators are that overall crime related demand in NI will surpass the 2019/20 level. A total of 93,918 criminal incidents (including fraud) were recorded by the PSNI during the first ten months of 2021/22¹⁴. Based upon monthly average crime rates, it is likely that annual recorded crime for 2021/22 will increase to 113,000 recorded incidents across the financial year. This would equate to the highest annual number of recorded crimes in NI since 2006/07.

4.4. The longer-term crime trends in NI outlined in our previous reports remain, with violence against the person crimes accounting for 44% of all crime in the first ten months of 2021/22, sexual offences accounting for 4%, fraud 5%, theft 19%, criminal damage 16% and other crimes including drug offences, possession of weapon offences

¹⁴ PSNI, 2022, Police Recorded Crime Statistics, Monthly update, period ending 31st January 2022, crime tables, excel spreadsheet

and public order offences accounting for 12%¹⁵. In addition to these offences, the PSNI have also dealt with:

- 25,128 domestic abuse incidents¹⁶ between April and December 2021
- 2,494 hate motivated incidents¹⁷ between April and December 2021
- 50,361 anti-social behaviour incidents¹⁸ between April 2021 and January 2022
- 3,164 road traffic collisions between January and September 2021, involving 4,753 road traffic casualties¹⁹
- 27,979 motoring offences²⁰ between April and November 2021
- 25,503 people who were stopped, searched²¹ and questioned between January and December 2021

4.5. Much of what was reported by the PFNI in our previous submission in relation to Covid-19 and the impact on policing in NI remains applicable today. The way in which the pandemic both challenged and complicated the role of policing in society continues to be felt and it is likely that this will persist for some time. Policing can only operate effectively when based on the consent of the communities it serves and whilst the powers provided to policing during the pandemic were based in law (albeit confusing and frequently changing law), for many in society they stepped away from the realm of consent and into the everyday lives of ordinary, typically law-abiding citizens. It will undoubtedly take time for the relationship between policing and society to fully repair, however in the interim police officers must continue to deal with the fall out, and all key policing stakeholders must be mindful of the impact of this.

¹⁵ Authors calculations

¹⁶ PSNI, 2022, Latest Domestic Abuse Statistics, Quarterly update, period ending 31 December 2021, Summary Tables, Excel Spreadsheet

¹⁷ PSNI, 2022, Latest Hate Motivation Incidents, Quarterly update, period ending 31 December 2021, Summary Tables, Excel Spreadsheet

¹⁸ PSNI, 2022, Latest Anti-Social Behaviour Statistics, Monthly update, period ending 31 January 2022, ASB Tables, Excel Spreadsheet

¹⁹ PSNI, 2022, Police Recorded Injury Road Traffic Collisions and Casualties, 1st January 2021 to 30th September 2021

²⁰ PSNI, 2022, Motoring Offence Statistics, Monthly Publication, published 27 January 2022, Accompanying Spreadsheet

²¹ PSNI, 2022, Stop and Search Statistics, quarterly update to 31 December 2021, Accompanying Excel spreadsheet

- 4.6. Whilst the strictest lockdown measures were implemented in 2020 and the early part of 2021, police continued to play a key role in *encouraging* compliance with rules, regulations and guidance throughout the latter part of 2021 and into 2022. In NI there were attempts to re-centre the role of the police in the *enforcement* of regulations, specifically in relation to mask wearing, however a more sensible partnership approach with businesses and transport operators was adapted with engagement and encouragement a central feature.
- 4.7. The PFNI position has remained that collaborative action is the only sustainable way forward and that the key role for police officers emerges where matters escalate, and intervention is deemed necessary to support staff. This position is borne from the extreme pressures and demands already placed on an under-resourced policing system, which are unrelenting in ordinary times, but which have been exacerbated by additional Covid-19 related demand. However, in addition, there is a very real need to consider the issue of public confidence in policing and rebuilding the dual principles of policing with the community and policing with consent. The PFNI believe that this will become increasingly important over the coming months and years as policing seeks to emerge from the shadow of Covid-19 and rebuild its place within the communities it serves. The role of visible neighbourhood policing will become increasingly important to this, however ongoing reports of reduced PSNI officer numbers and falling proactive policing are of great concern in this regard.
- 4.8. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted heavily on PSNI officer roles, caring responsibilities, childcare provisions and their health, and this continued to be evident throughout the second year of the pandemic. As a frontline service, officers were frequently working in environments which exposed them to Covid-19, and in extreme settings were faced with the weaponization of the virus as members of the public purposefully spat at or coughed on officers whilst claiming to be Covid-19 positive. These dangers have not disappeared. The most recent PSNI data available to us identifies that since 16 March 2020:
- 3,445 PSNI officers have tested positive for Covid-19 and
 - 11,209 periods of self-isolation have been recorded by PSNI officers
- 4.9. The impact of the pandemic on policing and on police officers forms an important component of the perfect storm which is currently facing policing. In order to evidence the significance of this issue within policing, respondents to the PFNI 2021 Workforce Survey were asked a range of questions relating to policing the Covid-19 pandemic. The results identify that:

- 33% of respondents (approximately 780 officers) reported that they had, or think they have had, Covid-19 at some point since the beginning of the pandemic. 50% of respondents stated that they did not believe they had had Covid-19 and the remaining 17% were unsure.
- Of those who reported that they had, or think they have had Covid-19, 48% reported that they believed they contracted it through work-related activities. 25% reported contracting the virus through non-work-related activities and 28% were unsure.
- 61% of respondents reported that they had been forced to self-isolate at home at some point during the pandemic, with a further 28% reporting that they had to take time off to look after dependents who have been unwell with Covid-19 or isolating. 4% reporting having to work from home as they are deemed high-risk, with a further 3% identifying that they have family members who are deemed high-risk.

4.10. Respondents were also asked to consider their views on the management of the pandemic by the PSNI:

- Half of all survey respondents (50%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the PSNI had managed the service well during the Covid-19 pandemic, compared to 24% who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- A key element of the management of Covid-19 involved the provision of appropriate items of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and despite half of respondents reporting that the service was not well managed well, 47% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had access to all of the equipment they personally needed to protect them from Covid-19 whilst at work. A third of respondents (33%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had access to the PPE they required.
- A significant majority of respondents (80%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the new policing powers which were introduced to manage Covid-19 were clear. This includes 51% who strongly disagreed. Just 5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- In a clear nod to those policing stakeholders who operate outside of everyday policing, 65% of survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the exposure to risk of policing during the Covid-19 pandemic has been fully understood, suggesting that a majority of officers believe the level of risk they faced personally, as a result of their public service, is not entirely recognised. 18% of respondents neither agreed nor disagree with this statement.
- A majority of survey respondents (72%) also disagreed or strongly disagreed that the degree of priority given to police officers during the vaccination

programme was fair. This includes 48% of respondents who strongly disagreed. Just 8% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

“Having been a frontline worker going in and out of homes during Covid I found it disgraceful that police officers were not given access to early Covid vaccinations. Having to deal with persons spitting in your face knowing that you had to wait until you were in the age-appropriate group to be vaccinated was about as morally degrading as anything I have dealt with during my existence” (Constable, 6-10 years’ service)

“No early vaccine for police even though as an LPT officer we were expected to stay on the front line and be out in the midst of it. I feel let down and completely unappreciated due to Covid 19” (Sergeant, 16-20 years’ service)

“As a frontline service, we should have been vaccinated earlier in the pandemic. As a response officer, the public we deal with did not socially distance and one my colleagues who was extremely careful in the job contracted through Covid in work and infected half our section... an early vaccination... would have prevented this and all the serious Covid sickness within PSNI” (Constable, 11-15 years’ service)

“I do not think the mental health impact of those policing frontline during the covid pandemic has truly come to light and this will be seen for years to come” (Constable, 16-20 years’ service)

4.11. Perhaps unsurprisingly Covid-19 featured as a key issue throughout the PFNI 2021 Workforce Survey. This included a survey section which examined the impact of the policing response to a series of high-profile international, national and local events, all of which emerged as a result of, or were altered due to, Covid-19. The results show that:

- Half of all survey respondents reported that these high-profile international, national and local events have had a negative effect on their ability to perform their day-to-day policing role. 45% of respondents stated that these events had no effect on their ability to perform their policing role, whilst 4% reported a positive effect.
- More than three in every five respondents (61%) stated that the events in question had a negative or very negative effect on how they feel about being a police officer. 32% reported the events had no effect on how they feel about being a police officer, whilst 8% reported a positive or very positive effect.
- A significant majority of respondents, 85%, reported that the public perception of the PSNI as an impartial police service has been negatively or very negatively

affected. 13% of respondents stated that the public perception of an impartial police service had not been affected at all, whilst 2% reported a positive effect.

- A majority of respondents (56%) also reported that their own perception of the PSNI as an impartial police service had been negatively affected by the events in question. 39% of respondents reported that the events had no impact on their own perception of an impartial police service, whilst 5% reported a positive effect.
- 4.12. In addition to dealing with demand from both crime and non-criminal incidents, proactive policing, providing support to other key public services and dealing with the outworkings of Covid-19 regulations, policing demand in NI has also been directly affected by Brexit and the implications this has for community related tensions here. Following the UK formally leaving the EU on the 31 January 2021, and the end of the transition period in December 2020, trading arrangements between NI, Great Britain and the EU have been operating as per the NI Protocol. The NI Protocol was devised, agreed upon and subsequently signed by the UK Government and the EU and has the effect of keeping NI in the EU's single market for goods in order to ensure no hard border on the island of Ireland.
- 4.13. However, as reported last year the NI Protocol has been beset by a myriad of issues in respect of the delivery of a variety of goods and has created significant discontent amongst the Unionist politicians and communities in NI. The NI Protocol is viewed by some within NI, predominately Unionists, as diminishing NI's place within the UK due to the construction of an internal trade barrier. Such is the Unionist opposition to the protocol that it has resulted in the collapse (once again) of the NI Executive.
- 4.14. Notwithstanding the significant political and operational implications of such political decisions in NI, it is important to recognise that such political instability also has serious implications for societal cohesion, and when combined with the growing sense of dissatisfaction from within the Unionist community regarding the NI Protocol, it is a fair assessment that the situation remains very uncertain and that Brexit related community tensions remain high. As such the potential for the eruption of serious public disorder, equivalent to that last witnessed during Easter 2021²², remains very real. Indeed, since Easter last year there have been a number of sporadic incidents

²² BBC, 8 April 2021, Belfast: Rioting 'was worst seen in Northern Ireland in years', <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56664868>

involving the hi-jacking and burning of public buses^{23 24} as well as localised trouble at various community interfaces. The addition of what is likely to be a fiercely fought local election campaign and a turbulent period of political wrangling following the election is likely to further fuel this highly energised environment.

- 4.15. The monitoring and management of this demand remains a very real concern for policing in NI. As we noted last year, the mix of Covid-19 related issues and significant Brexit complexities have politicised policing in NI to a level not seen for some time and this is a worrying development for those tasked with maintaining order and keeping people safe.

PSNI Officer Numbers

- 4.16. The New Decade, New Approach deal signed in January 2020 stated that “The Executive will increase police numbers to 7,500²⁵”. This remains the most up-to-date political agreement relating to police officer numbers in NI and forms a commitment to reinstating officer numbers to that envisaged in the Patten Report and deemed appropriate in the absence of a “permanently peaceful society²⁶”. Unfortunately, it would simply be inaccurate to describe the environment in NI as ‘permanently peaceful’ and as such, both the rationale and political agreement for increasing officer numbers to 7,500 remain current and necessary.

- 4.17. With this in mind, and considering the impact of the additional Brexit related funding secured in 2019 and ringfenced funding for ‘staffing’ in 2021/22, the PFNI previously reported upon the benefits of increased officer numbers and the drive towards realising an officer headcount of 7,500. This positive trend continued throughout 2021,

²³ BBC News, 1 November 2021, Newtownards: Bus hijacked by masked men and set on fire, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-59117071>

²⁴ Belfast Telegraph, 7 November 2021, Bus hijacked and set on fire near loyalist estate, <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/bus-hijacked-and-set-on-fire-near-loyalist-estate-41028155.html>

²⁵ New Decade, New Approach, January 2020, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf

²⁶ The Patten Report, 1999, The Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland, ‘A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland’

with numbers surpassing 7,000 in early 2022²⁷ (see Figure 2). However, as previously alluded to the direct and indisputable impact of the draft budget and the more than £200m hole it leaves in the PSNI budget over the next three years, will inevitably be felt in officer numbers which are projected to fall to 6,027 by 2025. These are not scare tactics, but rather the real-life implications of such severe budgetary reductions, and directly evidenced by the decision taken by the PSNI to defer the recruitment of 85 officers in February and March of this year, due to financial uncertainty. These outcomes are in direct contradiction of the political agreement signed in 2020 and pose a stark contrast to the £2bn investment in policing in England and Wales and the recruitment of an ‘additional’ 20,000 officers through ‘operation uplift’.

- 4.18. The management of officer numbers requires a delicate balance. Recruitment is a prolonged process, culminating in six months training prior to attesting as a police Constable. Furthermore, recruitment needs must be assessed alongside outflow levels and attrition rates as officers continue to exit the service for a variety of reasons. We have previously reported upon the potential for large numbers of officers to retire from the service as the ex-RUC Full-Time Reserves became eligible to maximise their pension. The PFNI remain concerned regarding the impact of a potentially large number of retirements from the service. The most recent PSNI data indicates that in January 2022 267 officers were eligible to retire *immediately* with a full pension and that by the end of 2022 this will include an additional 418 officers, meaning that in just one year the service could lose 685 experienced officers – this equates to 10% of the service. A further 550 officers will maximise their pension by the end of 2023 and 683 by the end of 2024²⁸.
- 4.19. In their 2021 report to the PRRB, the PSNI noted that the rate at which officers leave within a year of achieving 30 years’ service has increased from under 50% in 2012/13, to approximately 60% in recent years²⁹. Should 60% of those who are eligible to retire immediately, or by the end of 2022, leave within 12 months of attaining 30 years’ service, approximately 411 officers will retire from the service by 2023. This would be more than double the total number of retirements recorded in 2020/21 (156) and 2019/20 (203) and would have significant implications for officer numbers and experience. It is also worth noting the cyclical impact of such a significant and immediate reduction in officer numbers which may well have a cumulative effect of

²⁷ PSNI, 2022, Strength of Police Service Statistics, <https://www.psnipolice.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/strength-of-police-service-statistics/>

²⁸ PSNI Data, unpublished

²⁹ PSNI, 2021, Submission to the Police Remuneration Review Body, Federated and Superintending Ranks and Senior Officers, 2021/22

increasing the rate at which officers leave the service within a year of achieving 30 years' service.

- 4.20. PSNI data identifies that a total of 269 officers exited the service during 2020/21 (see Figure 3). This is the lowest outflow level recorded since 2013/14 and compares to 358 in 2019/20 and 408 in 2018/19. The reduction in officer outflow was evident in both medical retirements, down from 88 in 2019/20 to 61 in 2020/21 and retirements, reducing from 203 in 2019/20 to 156 in 2020/21³⁰. It is likely that the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact in delaying retirement plans as officers' sense of public service duty and resolve intensified in the face of a crisis. However, initial data from the first nine months of 2021/22 indicates an increase in outflow once again. Between April and December 2021/22 there have already been 67 medical retirements and 139 retirements from the service. Based on monthly averages, it is likely that the number of officers exiting the service in 2021/22 will surpass 380.
- 4.21. Between 2011/12 and 2020/21 the average number of annual voluntary resignations from the PSNI was 47, with a high of 56 in 2017/18 and a low of 32 in 2011/12. However, in the first nine months of 2021/22 alone there have already been 67 voluntary resignations from the PSNI³¹. Based on current monthly averages, it is likely that the total number of voluntary resignations from the PSNI during 2021/22 will be close to 90; double that recorded in 2020/21. This increase in resignations is a worrying development, which should be a concern to all policing stakeholders as it is indicative of an increase in the level of dissatisfaction across the workforce which has been evidenced throughout the PFNI 2021 Workforce Survey and which forms a core element of the 'perfect storm' which the PFNI believe is currently facing policing in NI.

Daily Working Realities

- 4.22. The PFNI have previously reported upon the decrease in the volume of pre-detailed overtime hours undertaken by PSNI officers, reducing from a series high of 2.34million hours in 2013/14 to 1.39million hours in 2019/20. This trend continued into 2020/21 with a total of 1.20million pre-detailed overtime hours worked – a reduction which correlates with the on-set of Covid-19 restrictions in 2020/21 and the associated decline in the level of recorded crime incidents during the year (see Figure 4). However, as the PFNI anticipated in our previous report, as Covid-19 restrictions reduced and the social economy reopened, alongside the return of large scale public gatherings and an associated increase in levels of crime, the number of pre-detailed overtime hours has once again increased, reaching 994,006 by December 2021/22 – which when

³⁰ PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

³¹ PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

considered as a monthly average indicates that total pre-detailed overtime hours for 2021/22 will return to 2019/20 levels of 1.33m hours³².

- 4.23. As previously noted, the overall trend of a reduction in pre-planned overtime has coincided with a subsequent increase in the number of casual overtime hours, increasing from a series low of 24,160 casual overtime hours worked in 2013/14, to a series high of 45,981 hours in 2019/20³³ – a 90% increase in six years. Whilst casual overtime hours also decreased in 2020/21, early evidence indicates the likelihood that they will increase again in 2021/22. It is worth reiterating that whilst casual overtime is a cheaper alternative for the service, it often comes with a higher price for the officer as it involves little to no advance warning of the requirement to remain at work and of course, also excludes the additional 30 minutes of unpaid overtime where retention is not pre-detailed following a shift. When this type of overtime becomes a frequent expectation, this can have implications for work-life balance and health and wellbeing, in particular where it is additional to an extended shift length. This additional burden and its impact *must* form a key consideration in all discussions on working hours and overtime within policing.
- 4.24. In addition to overtime, the analysis of the utilisation of the On-Call allowance also provides an additional measure of demand and an increased understanding of the working practices of serving PSNI officers. As shown in Figure 5 the number of periods of On-Call remained stable between 2017/18 and 2019/20, averaging at approximately 86,400 during the year. However, coinciding with the on-set of Covid-19 restrictions in 2020/21, the number of periods of On-Call increased by 40% to 121,207, whilst the number of officers claiming the On-Call allowance was 1,673. In the first nine months of 2021/22 PSNI data indicates that there have been 53,991 periods of On-Call³⁴, giving a monthly average of 5,999. When averaged over the financial year, it is likely that the total number of On-Call periods will reduce below 80,000 once again.
- 4.25. Sickness absence levels within the PSNI fell for the last two consecutive years, from an average of 13.92 working days lost per officer in 2018/19, to 12.65 days in 2019/20 and to 11.14 days in 2020/21 (see Figure 6). Whilst a positive outcome, the average number of working days lost due to sickness absence within the PSNI remains high when compared to sickness figures from between 2008/09 and 2013/14 (i.e., the six years preceding the significant increase in sickness levels registered from 2014/15) which averaged at 9.28 working days lost. Furthermore, PSNI data indicates that whilst sickness levels reduced in 2020/21, there has been an average of 10.92 working days

³² PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

³³ PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

³⁴ PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

lost due to sickness absence in the first nine months of 2021/22, and that the projected annual total for the year will be 14.53³⁵, surpassing *any* annual sickness figure since 2002/03.

- 4.26. A similar trend is also evident within the NI Civil Service with evidence of falling sickness absence rates in 2019/20 and 2020/21³⁶, as Covid-19 related absences were removed from sickness totals and increased flexible working/working from home enabled employees to continue working despite suffering from perhaps more minor illnesses. Nevertheless, despite these similar trends the rate of reduction in sickness absence has been more gradual within the PSNI, and as previously noted looks set to reverse in 2021/22.
- 4.27. Sickness absence due to mental ill-health and psychological illness, like previous years, remains very high and this continues to be a significant cause for concern for the PFNI. The proportion of working days lost within the PSNI due to psychological illness has been increasing from 33% of all days lost in 2017/18 to 38% in 2020/21. Early indicators are that this will reduce to approximately 35% of working days lost in 2021/22³⁷, however, at 35% this still constitutes an exceptionally high proportion of sickness absence and as noted last year this compares to a national average of approximately 11.6% of working days lost due to mental health in 2020³⁸. There has been no significant alteration to our well-repeated concerns regarding the provision of timely mental health support for officers within the PSNI. These views are widely reported and have been echoed by policing partners and various inspection bodies including HMICFRS³⁹.
- 4.28. The PFNI remain deeply concerned about the increasing number and severity of assaults perpetrated against PSNI officers and we are, of course, cognisant of the direct link between such attacks and sickness levels within the PSNI. A total of 3,018 assaults on police officers were officially recorded in 2020/21 – the highest number of recorded

³⁵ PSNI, 2021, Sickness Absence Management Information Report, unpublished

³⁶ NISRA, 2021, Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, 2020/21, <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/2021-Financial-Year-Absence-Report.pdf>

³⁷ PSNI Data, 2022, unpublished

³⁸ ONS, 2021, Sickness in the labour market, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2020>

³⁹ HMIC, 2020, The Police Service of Northern Ireland, An inspection of how well the service treats its workforce and the people of Northern Ireland, HMIC, London.

assaults against PSNI officers since 2013/14 and the significant public disorder incidents which emerged following the ‘flag protests’. Of these 3,018, 26% resulted in injury to the officer, the highest proportion of assaults with injury since 2016/17. This is part of a now apparent upwards trend in assaults increasing by 17% since 2016/17 and is only a small part of the overall picture as many assaults continue to go unreported.

- 4.29. In addition, the weaponization of Covid-19 continues to feature in NI as officers remain under threat from the virus and from members of the public who spit or bite whilst claiming to be Covid-19 positive. Thankfully the PFNI are now able to report a positive move in terms of the wider roll out of Spit and Bite Guards for serving police officers in NI, as the NI Policing Board have now *eventually* accepted that they are a necessary piece of protective equipment for our members at all times, irrespective of the prevalence of Covid-19 in wider society. However, it remains a great source of frustration that as with many things in NI, it takes a significantly longer period of time to get to this final and agreed position, despite the weight of evidence available, the availability of this equipment in all other UK police forces and the backing from the PSNI Chief Constable for the roll-out.
- 4.30. The PFNI Workforce Surveys are the sole measure of morale within the PSNI, with respondents asked to consider morale on three levels i.e., service wide morale, team morale and personal morale. The PFNI conducted their third Workforce Survey in November 2021, providing a third update to issues of morale within the PSNI. Across all three surveys and for each of the three levels of morale, a majority of respondents reported low morale. As such, the PFNI can conclude with some confidence that the issue of low morale remains a very real and live concern within the PSNI. This is perhaps unsurprising given the many areas of disenfranchisement within the PSNI which have already been highlighted in this report.
- 4.31. It is well reported that survey respondents are generally more inclined to report low levels of morale of others than of themselves and as such, the levels of low service wide morale and low team morale are generally greater than that reported of personal morale. Nevertheless, on these two measures the levels of low morale have been reducing, with service wide low morale reducing from 96% of respondents in 2015 to 89% in 2021 and low team morale reducing from 83% of respondents in 2015 to 66% in 2021. However, this trend is *not* repeated for low levels of personal morale, which actually *increased* from 54% of respondents in 2018 to 60% in 2021⁴⁰, highlighting a resurgence in levels of low personal morale within the PSNI. This should be of great concern to all policing stakeholders in NI, which when combined with the high levels of

⁴⁰ PFNI, 2021, 2021 Workforce Survey, results for all respondents, PFNI, Belfast.

dissatisfaction in many areas of policing in NI, inevitably features as a prominent issue in the 'perfect storm' which we currently feel is facing policing here.

- 4.32. Respondents to the PFNI 2021 Workforce Survey were asked to identify, from a list of ten factors, how each has affected their personal morale and given the increase in the level of low personal morale in 2021, these results are particularly insightful. The factor which was most commonly selected as having a negative effect on personal morale in 2021 was the delay in implementing pay increases and/or pay increments, with 92% of respondents reporting that this has had a negative effect on their personal morale. The second most commonly selected factor was how the police are treated, at 86%, whilst the impact of NI's political environment was selected third, at 80%.
- 4.33. Issues of remuneration were selected fourth and fifth, with 74% of respondents identifying that their pay and benefits negatively impacted their personal morale and 70% stating that their pension was a negative contributor. 64% of respondents reported that policing during the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative effect on their morale.
- 4.34. 13% of respondents reported their intention to leave the service, including 5% who reported that they are currently seeking alternative employment and will resign as soon as they can and 7% who reported that they are planning to leave within the next two years. All the survey respondents who reported that they intended to leave the PSNI, either immediately or within the following two years, were asked to identify, from a list of twelve factors, what extent each had on their intention to leave. Significantly, the factor most likely to have a major effect on the intention to leave the PSNI was personal morale (which we now know is deteriorating), as selected by 70% of respondents.

5. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

5.1. The dual impact of Covid-19 and Brexit have undoubtedly introduced a greater degree of instability and unpredictability into the UK and NI economies over the last number of years and as such the provision of robust and reliable economic data has been complicated. With this in mind, the PFNI have sought to include economic data which provides an understanding of broad trends within the economy, including where possible comparisons with pre-pandemic levels, rather than providing extensive commentary on the economic impact of the pandemic on an annual basis.

- Following the 9.4% Covid-19 related reduction in UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020, annual UK GDP increased by 7.5% in 2021, including an increase of 1.0% in Q4 2021. However, when compared to the same quarter a year previous, UK GDP increased by 6.5% in Q4 2021.
 - The level of quarterly GDP in Q4 2021 was 0.4% below its pre-Covid-19 level⁴¹.
- Overall economic activity in NI has recovered from the predominant reduction in output recorded during Q2 2020 and is currently at a level not seen since mid-2008⁴². The NI Composite Economic Index (NICEI) indicates that NI economic activity increased at a faster rate than UK GDP, when measured biennially, however UK GDP has grown at a faster rate than NICEI over the year. A consideration of biennial growth, i.e., growth over the last two years comparing Q3 2021 with Q3 2019, provides an illustration of change relative to pre-pandemic levels. According to NICEI, NI economic output increased by 3.0% biennially. This includes 3.1% growth in the private sector and 2.9% growth in the public sector.
 - Although the measures are not produced on a fully equivalent basis, UK GDP over the last two years (biennial change) *reduced* by 1.6%⁴³.

⁴¹ ONS, 2022, GDP first quarterly estimate, UK: October to December 2021, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpfirstquarterlyestimateuk/octobertodecember2021>

⁴² NISRA, 2022, NI Economy & Labour Market, A summary of key statistics, <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Economy%20%20Labour%20Market%20-%20A%20Summary%20of%20Key%20Statistics%20-%20January%202022.pdf>

⁴³ NISRA, 13 January 2022, Economic Activity in Northern Ireland by quarterly NI Composite Economic Index (NICEI), Quarter 3 (July – September) 2021, <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/NI-Composite-Economic-Index-Q3-2021.pdf>

- The services sector accounts for around half of economic activity in NI. Services output is now above pre-pandemic level and has equalled the series high first experienced in Q4 2006. Output in NI is up 5.7% over the year and 2.8% over the latest quarter⁴⁴.
 - Production accounts for around 15% of economic activity in NI. Production output in NI increased by 3.6% over the year. Manufacturing, which accounts for the vast majority (79.1%) of production output, is now above the Q3 2020 level⁴⁵.
 - Construction accounts for 8% of economic activity in NI – construction output increased by 7.8% over the year and is 2.6% above the pre-pandemic level seen in Q4 2019⁴⁶.
- Analysis by PwC indicates that the NI Economy has *“exceeded expectations and is the first region to largely return to pre-Covid levels...this has contributed to narrowing the gap in output with the UK⁴⁷”*.
 - Danske Bank quarterly sectoral forecasts have predicted growth in NI economic output of approximately 4.0% during 2022. However, this forecast is tempered by uncertainties relating to Covid-19, on-going supply chain disruption contributing to higher levels of inflation, changes to monetary and fiscal policy and continued extra trade frictions stemming from Brexit all of which will continue to place significant pressure on real wages whilst eroding household purchasing power⁴⁸.

⁴⁴ NISRA, 2022, NI Economy & Labour Market, A summary of key statistics, <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/Economy%20%20Labour%20Market%20-%20A%20Summary%20of%20Key%20Statistics%20-%20January%202022.pdf>

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ NISRA, 2022, Construction Output Statistics, <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/economic-output-statistics/construction-output-statistics>

⁴⁷ PwC, December 2021, UK Economic Outlook, <https://www.pwc.co.uk/economic-services/ukeo/ukeo-december-2021.pdf>

⁴⁸ Danske Bank, 2022, Economic Analysis, Northern Ireland Quarterly Sectoral Forecasts, 2021 Quarter 4, <https://danskebank.co.uk/-/media/danske-bank/uk/business/economic-analysis/quarterly-sectoral/danske-bank-northern-ireland-quarterly-sectoral-forecasts-2021-q4-final.pdf?rev=0e6deecb34034f53bc15bd7f4735099b&hash=0C94FC42C69B8EF94BC2567EBBDA3CF>

- According to the NI Labour Force Survey (LFS), the NI unemployment rate for October-December 2021 decreased over the quarter (-1.3pps) and over the year (-0.8pps), to 2.7%. The UK equivalent unemployment rate is estimated at 4.1%. The NI employment rate subsequently increased over the quarter (+0.5pps) and over the year (+0.5pps) to 70.7%, whilst the UK employment rate is estimated at 75.5%. Economic inactivity remains high in NI, increasing over the quarter (+0.05pps) and over the year (+0.01pps) to 27.3%. The UK economic activity rate is estimated at 21.2%⁴⁹.

The Cost of Living Crisis

- 5.2. Whilst the economic data emerging from the end of 2021 and into 2022 casts a more positive light than was evident in early 2021, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the economy will persist for some time. However, in the short to medium term the most pressing economic issue facing households across the UK is the current ‘cost-of-living crisis’ and the impact on everyday spending, the value of take-home pay and disposable income. The Bank of England has warned UK households to brace themselves for the steepest drop in living standards for 30 years, as the cost-of-living crisis sets in⁵⁰. The cost of living crisis refers to the fall in ‘real’ incomes, caused by a combination of high inflation outstripping wage increases (which in the public sector is a political decision) and upcoming tax increases which have squeezed incomes for many households (also a political decision). The current crisis is expected to worsen throughout the year as inflation continues to soar, and as planned tax increases are introduced from April 2022⁵¹.
- 5.3. The Consumer Prices’ Index (CPI) rose by 5.5% in the 12 months to January 2022, up from 5.4% in December 2021. This is the highest CPI 12-month inflation rate in the National Statistics series, which began in 1997, and was last higher in the historical modelled series in 1992, when it stood at 7.1%. The Consumer Prices’ Index including occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH) rose by 4.9% in the same period, up from 4.8% in December 2021. This too is the highest recorded 12-month inflation rate in the series, which began in 2006, and the highest rate since CPIH stood at 5.1% in 1992. The Retail

⁴⁹ NISRA, 2022, Northern Ireland Labour Market Report,

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/Labour-Market-Report-February-2022.pdf>

⁵⁰ The Guardian, 4 Feb 2022, Cost of living: families face biggest fall in disposable income for three decades, Bank of England warns – as it happened, <https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2022/feb/03/cost-of-living-crunch-energy-bills-price-cap-uk-interest-rates-bank-of-england-business-live>

⁵¹ Institute for Government, 2022, Cost of Living Crisis,

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/cost-living-crisis>

Price Index (RPI) rose by 7.8% in the 12-months to January 2022, up from 7.5% in December 2021. This is the highest RPI rate since 1991.

- 5.4. This high level of inflationary pressure looks set to continue throughout 2022 and into 2023, with a general economic consensus that any reduction in inflation will emerge slowly. The assessment of independent inflationary forecasts released by HM Treasury predict that inflation will remain above the Bank of England target rate of 2% throughout 2022 and 2023, with a CPI forecast of 5.5% in 2022 and 2.8% in 2023, and an RPI forecast of 7.4% in 2022 and 4.3% in 2023⁵². Please note however that these forecasts were collated in February 2022, prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and associated economic sanctions. There remains a significant degree of uncertainty regarding the scale of the impact this will have on inflation and the cost of living in the UK, however it is generally accepted that this will push inflation higher than forecasters have previously predicted.
- 5.5. The PFNI last made reference to concerns about above target levels of inflation and the impact on take home-pay in 2018. At that point CPI was 2.5%, RPI was 3.3% and CPIH was 2.3%, whilst police pay remained under an effective 1% cap, thus reducing the real term value of take-home pay by 1.5% when measured against CPI. The PFNI also provided evidence of rising prices across all categories of goods and services at that time. However, in 2022 the rate of inflation is *more* than double that experienced in 2018 and whilst all categories of goods and services have contributed to the increasing level of inflation, this has primarily been driven by increases in the cost of housing and household services (including water, gas and other fuels) and transport costs, which in the 12 months to January 2022 accounted for 2.5percentage points of the 5.5% rise in CPI. Increases in the cost of food accounted for an additional 0.5percentage points⁵³.
- 5.6. Unlike in 2018, the key drivers behind the current rising cost of living are those costs which are fundamental to everyday life, providing little opportunity for cost saving measures or 'cutbacks' to help reduce the cost burden. As energy prices keep rising, household bills continue to go up, and as has been evident so far, with little substantial assistance offered by the Government. As such, households have little choice but to absorb these costs, thus squeezing their household income and reducing disposable income. In NI the Consumer Council tracks changes in the price of household gas,

⁵² HM Treasury, February 2022, Forecasts for the UK economy: a comparison of independent forecasts, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1055216/Forecomp_February_2022.pdf

⁵³ ONS, 2022, Consumer price inflation, UK: January 2022, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/january2022>

electricity and home heating oil (unlike in the rest of the UK, households in NI are particularly reliant upon home heating oil, with approximately 68% of all households heated in this way) via the Home Energy Index (HEI). According to this tracker, the HEI for February 2022 (the most up-to-date data) reached an historical high, with the composite HEI increasing from 115 points in January 2021 to 175 points in February 2022⁵⁴. In monetary terms, the estimated electricity and home heating oil bills for a medium-sized property in NI, comprising of three to four people, expected to use around 3,200 kWh of electricity and 2,700 litres of oil, will have increased from £554 for electricity last March to £706 in February 2022 (an increase of £162 or 30%) and from £998 for home heating oil in March 2021, to £1,566 in February 2022 (an increase of £568 or 57%)⁵⁵. This equates to a combined increase of £730 on just two household bills and, for context is *more* than the monetary value of the 2020 2.5% pay increase for a Constable at pay point 5 or below. It is also worth reiterating that these price rises are *before* the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the associated economic sanctions; indeed, NI's oil prices have increased by a further 35% in the week following the invasion of Ukraine, with the average price for 900 litres of home heating oil increasing from £556 to £758⁵⁶.

- 5.7. As noted, the second factor contributing to the current cost of living crisis is the impact of the imminent tax increases which will squeeze household incomes even further. These tax increases have two forms, firstly a freeze in tax free allowances and secondly a 10% increase in National Insurance, which when considered together have created the highest peacetime tax burden facing UK households, and at a time of soaring inflation and declining living standards. The UK Government announced that the tax-free personal allowance would be frozen at £12,570 from April 2022 until April 2026, meaning that taxpayers will pay income tax on more of their income than if the allowance rose with inflation. This tax increase will directly impact *all* police officers in NI. In addition to the financial impact of the freeze in personal allowance, the 476 federated officers who are currently higher rate taxpayers (i.e., Inspectors and Chief Inspectors) will also feel the impact of the freeze in the higher rate threshold, which

⁵⁴ The Consumer Council, February 2022, The Consumer Council's Home Energy Index, February 2022, https://www.consumercouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Home_Energy_Index_February_2022.PDF

⁵⁵ McNeilly, C., 2 February 2022, Belfast Telegraph, 'Scale and speed' of energy price hikes leaves NI consumers reeling, with lowest paid being hit for an annual £700 increase, <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/scale-and-speed-of-energy-price-hikes-leaves-ni-consumers-reeling-with-lowest-paid-being-hit-for-an-annual-700-increase-41305457.html>

⁵⁶ BBC, March 2022, Energy Prices: NI oil prices up 35% since Russia invades Ukraine, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60571922>

has been frozen at its current level of £50,270. This means that these taxpayers will pay 40% on more of their income than if the threshold has risen with inflation.

- 5.8. Furthermore, the UK Government also announced that National Insurance payments for employees and employers will rise by 10%, or 1.25 percentage points, from April 2022. The amount of National Insurance you pay depends on your employment status and how much you earn, meaning a flat rate analysis of the impact of this tax increase is difficult. However, HM Revenue and Customs assessed that around 29 million individuals would be financially *worse off* as a result of the increase to National Insurance, with an individual earning the median basic rate taxpayer's income of £24,000 required to pay an additional £180 per year, whilst an individual earning the median higher rate taxpayer's income of £67,100 expected to pay an additional £715 per year⁵⁷. Under the current National Insurance payment, a Constable on pay point 5 pays approximately £2,451 in National Insurance each year. However, with the 10% increase to this tax, this payment will increase to £2,665 – an increase of £214 per year. Furthermore, this tax rise will disproportionately impact early and mid-career officers, as the National Insurance rate payable reduces significantly once your income rises above £50,000.
- 5.9. The fundamental outcome of these policy decisions is that police officers in NI will pay *more* tax and take home *less* of their pay each month than was previously the case, all at a time of spiralling costs, declining living standards and following a decade of real terms pay decline. The only possible way of offsetting a further damaging fall in the value of police pay is through the provision of a pay award which, at the very least, keeps pace with inflation.

Police Pay

- 5.10. To fully contextualise the evidence regarding police pay, it is important to remember that police officers in NI are currently dealing with the ramifications of the *fifth* consecutive delay in the implementation of recommendations made as part of the pay review process, as well as significant delays in the implementation of contractual, incremental payments. Evidence has already been presented regarding the impact of these delays on morale within the PSNI and the real-life implications of such appalling disregard for the personal finances of serving police officers, at a time when people are rightly worried about the cost of living (see section 3). This continues to be a major concern for the PFNI and a very real source of anger and disillusionment amongst our members.

⁵⁷ HM Revenue & Customs, December 2021, Policy Paper, Health and Social Care Levy, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-levy/health-and-social-care-levy>

- 5.11. Debates and discussions regarding police pay have become increasingly fractious over the last number of years. It is no secret, and indeed the PFNI see no benefit in providing additional 'evidence' to highlight what is readily acknowledged and accepted, that the value of police pay has been continuously eroded since 2011, as a result of three pay freezes, five 1% pay caps and continued 'pay restraint'. With cumulative CPI of 28.1% between 2011 and January 2022, CPIH of 26.6% and RPI of 39.5% and police pay increasing by just 12%, the real terms value of police pay has declined when considered against any measure of inflation, including a real terms reduction of 16.1% when measured against CPI, 14.6% against CPIH and 27.5% against RPI. Regardless of the favoured measure of inflation used, there is simply no disputing the fact that police pay has been substantially cut, in real terms, over the last ten years. This is, unsurprisingly, a major component of the 'perfect storm' the PFNI have so frequently referenced.
- 5.12. There is a strong historical correlation between the rate of inflation and pay growth. Periods of high inflation in the 1970s and 1980s were generally followed by higher pay increases as companies rightly sought to compensate employees for the higher cost of living. Despite the ludicrous suggestion from the Governor of the Bank of England that employees should *not* seek higher wages despite the soaring cost of living⁵⁸ (a suggestion which was rightly dismissed by the Prime Minister), it is clearly self-evident that to deny employees a pay rise which at the very least covers the additional cost of living, thus impeding household affordability and negatively impacting their standard of living, would undoubtedly have an impact on workforce morale and organisational commitment.
- 5.13. Although there is a time lag between an increase in inflation and rising wages (in particular for public sector groups who are covered by pay review bodies who report at specific times of the year), early indicators are that pay has indeed started to increase. The most up-to-date official data (i.e. the Monthly Wages and Salaries Survey) identifies that the rate of annual pay growth for total pay in the UK was 4.3% and the annual pay growth for regular pay was 3.7% in October to December 2021. However, despite this strong growth and owing to the current exceptional level of inflation, in real terms total and regular pay actually *declined* by 0.1% and 0.8% respectively (when measured against CPIH). The size of this decline was, however, buffered by rising pay

⁵⁸ Gabor, D., February 2022, The Guardian, The Bank of England has only one solution to rising inflation – make workers pay, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/08/bank-of-england-rising-inflation-workers-pay-andrew-bailey>

settlements. Average total pay growth for the private sector was 4.6%, whilst the public sector again lagged behind at 2.6%⁵⁹.

- 5.14. In addition, the most up-to-date data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) identifies that median weekly pay for full-time employees increased by 4.3% between April 2020 and April 2021. Despite the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the private sector, employees in the private sector received a larger pay increase between 2020 and 2021, at 3.6%, compared to an increase of 2.5% in the public sector. Pay increases in NI were the largest of the 12 UK regions, at 8.8%, followed by 5.6% in the West Midlands and 5.1% in Scotland⁶⁰.
- 5.15. Independent surveys of anticipated pay settlements for 2022 provide further indication of the likelihood of increased pay awards during this year. Data from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development⁶¹ (CIPD) suggests that the median pay settlement in 2022 will be 3%, whilst Incomes Data Research⁶² (IRD) report that half of all 2022 pay awards will be at 3% *or more*. Whilst this does identify higher wage increases than have been reported in recent years, both of these surveys were conducted in 2021, prior to the more recent increase in actual and predicted inflation. Indeed, more recent data analysed by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, informed by evidence from the Agents' pay survey, estimate that wage growth is expected to rise to just under 5% (4.75%) over the year, higher than that previously predicted at the end of 2021⁶³.

⁵⁹ ONS, February 2022, Average Weekly Earnings in Great Britain: February 2022, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/february2022>

⁶⁰ ONS, 2021, Employee earnings in the UK: 2021, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/annualsurveyofhoursandearnings/2021>

⁶¹ CIPD, 2022, Labour Market Outlook, Views from Employers, Winter 2021/22, file://net-file/FolderRedirections/claire/Downloads/labour-market-outlook-winter-2021-22_tcm18-106241.pdf

⁶² Woolacott, Z., January 2022, Half of pay awards in 2022 worth 3% or more, <https://www.incomesdataresearch.co.uk/resources/viewpoint/half-of-pay-awards-in-2022-worth-3-or-more#:~:text=An%20early%20look%20at%20pay,the%20overall%20median%20was%202.0%25.>

⁶³ Bank of England, Monetary Policy Committee, February 2022, Monetary Policy Report, February 2022, <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/monetary-policy-report/2022/february/monetary-policy-report-february-2022.pdf?la=en&hash=BD71A8D49FA5973A333213CE8AD3D266ED9C3441>

5.16. Given the continued growth in inflation, mounting evidence of increasing pay awards, the recent history of the police pay award and the subsequent degradation of the value of police pay, alongside the strength of evidence regarding the impact of issues of pay and remuneration on morale, motivation and organisational commitment, it is evident that the pay settlement provided to policing for the 2022/23 review round *must* exceed these levels, and at the very least keep pace with inflation. As such, the PFNI are strongly recommending that the PRRB propose a pay increase for PSNI officers which reflects the current value of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). We are therefore seeking an increase of 5.5% to the current pay scales of all federated officers in the PSNI.

Recommendation 2

An uplift of 5.5% to the annual salaries of all federated officers in the PSNI, as payable from September 2022.

5.17. Pay, the adequacy of pay and satisfaction with pay were central features of the PFNI 2021 Workforce Survey:

- A high level of dissatisfaction was reported across all three measures of satisfaction with pay and allowances. 61% of respondents reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their basic pay, alongside 57% who reported dissatisfaction with their allowances. In total, 60% of respondents stated they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their overall remuneration.
 - The analysis of levels of satisfaction with basic pay by position within the pay scale identifies that respondents who are *not* at the top of their pay scale are more likely than those who are, to report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their basic pay, at 66% and 59% respectively. This hints at the importance of the financial value of take-home pay (particularly for those with a number of years to go until they reach the top of the pay scale), rather than the perceived positive impact of the anticipated receipt of incremental increases in pay overtime.

“...top rate Police Constable pay is being overtaken by low skilled jobs such as building site labourer...It is no longer a well-paid job. I know many officers now seeking an additional job or looking to leave the PSNI due to the pay. Every year there is an issue with a 1 percent pay rise which in real terms is a pay cut year on year and has been like that for a long time... Basic living is now a struggle on a top rate Constables pay” (Constable, 16-20 years’ service)

“Pay scales within PSNI are extremely poor. Starting salary is terrible when compared to likes of low responsibility jobs like Tesco etc. With minimum wage etc being

increased makes PSNI pay bad compared to other low skilled jobs. It is becoming more difficult to justify staying as a police officer when for a minor pay cut, work life balance, job satisfaction and stress could be reduced significantly” (Constable, 6-10 years’ service)

“Part of the considerations for joining was the Pension and pay and conditions, but over the past 12 years we have basically taken a pay cut every year due to inflation and the benefits e.g. food and NI allowance are being eroded. This has affected my wellbeing and I am deeply worried about my financial future after 25 years of service. I feel totally undervalued by the Government and public for doing a dangerous job and keeping the public and other officers safe” (Constable, 21-25 years’ service)

- A majority of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with each of the four fairness of pay statements, this includes 68% who disagreed or strongly disagreed that they are fairly paid considering the amount of experience and training they have. Almost four in five respondents (77%) disagreed that they are fairly paid considering the hazards they face and 74% disagreed that they are fairly paid considering the amount of effort they put into their job. However, the highest level of disagreement with the perception of fairness statements involved fairness relating to the stresses and strains of the job, with 83% of respondents disagreeing with this statement.

“Taking into consideration the risks involved with the job and the fact that I have to travel a total of over 120 miles round trip to go to station, I believe I am not paid anywhere near enough for the rank of a Constable. I am now worse off financially than what I was 5 years ago” (Constable, 0-2 years’ service)

“Police pay and pension links closely to mental health and feeling valued in the workplace. If we were treated and paid fairly then perhaps working within the Police would be a positive experience... I was threatened and lost money as I had to move out of my home and sell my car” (Sergeant, 16-20 years’ service)

“Pay: Very poor considering the work we do within the community and the risk that we regularly take within the course of our duties. Nearly two years out on the ground and working for £1550 per month in hand is simply not worth what we go through” (Constable, 0-2 years’ service)

- 31% of respondents disagreed that their pay is enough to provide for the basic things in life, whilst 42% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they get enough money from their pay to live comfortably. Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents disagreed that the pay increases they receive are enough to maintain their standards of living and 63% disagreed that they are financially better off now than they were 5 years ago.

- 10% of respondents reported that, on a monthly basis, they never or almost never have enough money to cover all of their essentials, whilst more than one third of all respondents (34%) reported that they currently worry about the state of personal finances every day or almost every day.

“Pay and Benefits have been continually eroded, so many benefits have just been removed from us. Basic pay has not kept up with inflation so in real terms I am worse off now than when I joined the job” (Constable, 26-30 years’ service)

“I genuinely don't understand how after reaching 20years in service and being promoted to Sgt I am financially worse off than a few years ago. The cost of living has risen exponentially whilst Police pay has plateaued. (Sergeant, 16-20 years’ service)

“Generally, I view the organisation as a vocational job. I love what I do. A number of external factors affect that: 1. The pay scale is dreadful I accept that I am generally inexperienced, but I barely get enough money to cover my needs, wants are a real stretch. The pay is dreadful I feel a fair pay take home should be approx. £2000 per month including NI allowance” (Constable, 0-2 years’ service)

- The affordability of housing is a significant element of the cost of living. As such, respondents were asked to rate their perception of the affordability of housing in the area in which they live. 28% of respondents reported this as affordable or very affordable, compared to 57% who stated it is expensive and 15% who reported it as very expensive.
- The issue of housing affordability is compounded in NI as many police officers report having to live in a small number of specific areas in order to safeguard their personal security. This can have significant implications for the cost of housing for police officers in NI, with some of the more affordable locations deemed less appropriate. Furthermore, this also has implications for travel, transport and work-life balance as often living close to their main place of work is not considered possible, resulting in many officers having to travel significant distances to their work. According to the NI Travel Survey, the average commuting distance in NI between 2017 and 2019 was 9.6 miles⁶⁴. In contrast, the average commuting distance reported by police officers in this survey was 18.9miles; almost double the average NI commuting distance. This is an indication of the additional commuting time and cost burden (which is

⁶⁴ NISRA, 2021, Travel Survey for Northern Ireland – In-depth Report, Department for Infrastructure, Belfast, available from: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/system/files/publications/infrastructure/tsni-in-depth-report-2017-2019.pdf>

particularly problematic at the current time owing to the exceptionally high, and rising, cost of fuel) placed on police officers as a result of their public service.

“I travel 82 miles daily to and from work which per 4-week pattern is a total of 1,312 miles and with an increase in fuel of about 15p this certainly adds up” (Constable, 3-5 years’ service)

“I travel 108 miles a day to work, my costs to actually get to my normal place of duty compared to my pay is terrible. Any expendable income I have is spent on travelling to work” (Constable, 3-5 years’ service)

“I greatly enjoy my job and where I am based however in relation to pay, I live 58 miles from work and had no choice in where I was stationed. I have to complete a 116-mile trip for work each day and this is expensive in fuel” (Constable, 0-2 years’ service)

“Due to the threat level, it is not safe to reside in the majority of lower class/republican areas meaning limited options of areas to purchase properties which are often very expensive & puts people from these demographics off joining the police” (Constable, 3-5 years’ service)

“The security risk is very high but because of the pay and reward I am handcuffed to the places I live because of the cost of housing. I come from a working-class nationalist area and have had to sacrifice a lot to become a police officer” (Constable, 16-20 years’ service)

Police Allowances

- 5.19. Following a recommendation by the PRRB, an ‘independent’ review of PSNI allowances was carried out by an external consultancy between October and December 2021. This review considered the following five allowances: the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA), the Competency Related Threshold Payment (CRTP), On-Call allowance, Dog Handlers’ allowance and Motor Vehicle allowance.
- 5.20. The PFNI are confused about the requirement for, and purpose, of this review. We have been operating under the illusion that PSNI officers’ pay, terms and conditions are already considered as part of an independent review process, through which the Police Remuneration Review Body review evidence submitted and make informed recommendations based on such. The inclusion of a secondary ‘review’ by a consultancy body is perplexing. It appears that this review is simply operating as a conduit to compile evidence from relevant stakeholders in NI, and then have this submitted to the PRRB by the DoJ as part of the annual review process. In essence this is a review within a review and as such the PFNI seriously question the appropriateness of the cost to the public purse, as well as the necessity of it to this process. We believe that it is the role of the PRRB to gather evidence, review that evidence and come to informed decisions based on the evidence presented.
- 5.21. Nevertheless, the PFNI reluctantly participated in this ‘review’ in October 2021. We were, however, surprised by the direction the review took and the information which was sought from us. Far from attempting to utilise the unique and specialised position of the PFNI, as the only representative body for over 90% of police officers in NI, it appeared that our role within this process was simply one of educator. During our sole engagement with the reviewer the PFNI were asked to provide clarity around the practicalities and purpose of each of the five allowances, rather than any attempt to understand the integral importance of each allowance to the officers in receipt, as well as to the service as a whole. For example, there was little in the way of discussion about the emotional value attached to the NITA, nor the historical importance of this payment as a vital recognition of the extraordinary environment in which police officers continue to operate, relative to their counterparts across the UK. The PFNI believe that it is difficult for bodies/groups who are not closely involved in policing, to truly appreciate the impact of having to check under your car each morning for a bomb, or to hide your occupation from family and friends. This is made even more difficult when there is no consideration given to, nor evidence sought about, such complex and unnatural actions.
- 5.22. In addition to these frustrations, the PFNI are extremely disappointed that we are being forced to submit our annual report to the PRRB without any sight of the report from the review of allowances. The reviewing body submitted this report to the DoJ on the

24th January, and despite repeated requests for sight of it, this has not been forthcoming. Seven weeks have passed, and we have now been informed that ‘the findings’ would be shared with the PRRB, whilst officials may be able to share ‘more detail’ at some point between the submission of the written report and the oral submissions. The PFNI strongly believe that it is deeply and inherently unfair that the sole body providing evidence on behalf of federated officers have not been afforded the appropriate opportunity to critically analyse the report and the findings which stem from it, in time for our written submission. Whilst we anticipate having some insight into the outcomes in time for our oral submission, this is not, in our view, an adequate substitute for the detail which can be more appropriately presented in written evidence. It is also worth remembering, that this written report serves as the key method of ensuring our members are fully aware of the issues being discussed in relation to *their* pay, terms and conditions and how the PFNI are responding to them on their behalf.

Northern Ireland Transition Allowance (NITA)

- 5.23. The PFNI were pleased that the PRRB recommended an increase to the value of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) in their seventh report on NI, despite their inability to make a recommendation on pay. Whilst inevitably resulting in a move away from the link between the value of the NITA and the pay award, this provided a signal to our members of the continued importance of the payment and a recognition of the difficult and unique circumstances under which policing in NI continues to operate.
- 5.24. The security threat in NI remains at ‘SEVERE’ which means an attack is highly likely. As shown in Figure 7 the number of security related incidents in 2021 remained high, including 2 security related deaths, 27 shooting incidents, 5 bombing incidents, 14 paramilitary style shootings and 37 paramilitary style assaults.
- 5.25. As with our previous submissions, it is our position that the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA), as a fundamental element of the reward package provided to police officers in NI and paid in recognition of the extraordinary circumstances in which police officers continue to serve here, should continue to be uplifted in line with the pay award.

Recommendation 3

That the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) should continue to be uplifted in line with the pay award.

Dog Handlers' Allowance

- 5.26. The PFNI were extremely disappointed that the PRRB did not make a recommendation regarding the value of the Dog Handlers' Allowance in the 2021/22 pay review round. This is an allowance which is paid to a small, but vitally important group of police officers who hold the specialist role of Dog Handler and who keep and care for a police dog in their home.
- 5.27. The value of the Dog Handlers' Allowance has historically been uprated in line with the pay award, meaning that it has been subject to the same decade long period of restraint as pay, thus reducing its value overtime. It has been, and remains, our position that such is the importance of this payment that it should be protected from inflationary pressures to ensure its value is not eroded to such a point whereby the cost of keeping and caring for a police dog becomes financially burdensome. This is particularly important in the current economic climate, where the cost of living has increased substantially, as previously evidenced.
- 5.28. The only alternative solution to the payment of the Dog Handler's Allowance is for police dogs to be homed and cared for solely within police kennels. However, this has obvious negative cost implications as well as inevitably increasing the call out time for operations requiring a police dog.
- 5.29. It is therefore the recommendation of the PFNI that the historical link between the pay award and the Dog Handlers' Allowance is maintained, albeit with a provision for protection against the cost of living in circumstances where no pay award (or a pay award significantly below inflation) is recommended.

Recommendation 4

That the Dog Handlers' Allowance is uplifted in line with the annual pay increase provided to PSNI officers. If no pay award is to be recommended, or a recommended pay award falls significantly below the level of inflation, the Dog Handlers' Allowance should be uprated in line with inflation.

Competency Related Threshold Payment (CRTP)

- 5.30. In our seventh submission to the PRRB the PFNI clearly articulated our position on the Competency Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) which has been the subject of debate over the last number of pay review rounds. Our position on this payment remains in line with that provided in 2021/22, namely that whilst we oppose the removal of this important allowance, we reluctantly accept the position of the PRRB regarding the impact of retention on pay parity with England and Wales.

5.31. As such, and in keeping with the requirements of pay parity, the PFNI remain steadfast in our position that the removal of this allowance must therefore coincide with the *immediate* implementation of the appropriate replacement allowance, as available in England and Wales i.e., the Unsocial Hours Allowance. This will ensure the continuation of parity in pay and minimal detriment to the least number of officers within the PSNI.

Unsocial Hours Allowance

This allowance would allow for payments to be made to officers, regardless of length of service, to compensate them for every full hour worked between the hours of 8pm and 6am.

This allowance should be paid at an hourly rate of 10% of the member's hourly rate of pay, calculated by multiplying by 6/125200 the member's annual rate of pay. A fixed rate for a full-time officer working a standard shift system should also be implemented at the same rate as England and Wales.

5.32. The options for the removal of CRTP are as follows:

1. Full removal of CRTP on 31st March 2023 with the appropriate replacement allowances implemented immediately from that date.
2. A phased removal of CRTP over two years, whilst remaining open to new applicants during this time. This would involve the reduction in the value of the allowance over a two-year period by approximately 33% each year. The scheme would remain open to new applicants and would be removed in its entirety by 31st March 2025.
3. A phased removal of CRTP over two years, however closed to new applicants during this time. This would involve a reduction in the allowance over two years as outlined above. The scheme would be closed to new applicants from 31st March 2023 and removed in its entirety by 31st March 2025.

5.33. In the interests of fairness and ensuring the most equitable transition from the use of CRTP for our members, it is the PFNI's position that the replacement Unsocial Hours Allowance must be paid *immediately* to those officers to whom CRTP will not be open for application and phased in for those officers currently in receipt of CRTP, as that allowance is removed over a period of time.

5.34. The PFNI will not countenance any situation in which CRTP is removed from our members and the appropriate replacement allowance is not implemented.

Recommendation 5

Notwithstanding the particulars regarding the transition away from CRTP, that the Unsocial Hours Allowance must be implemented immediately within the PSNI, in place of CRTP.

Mutual Aid Allowances

- 5.35. Mutual aid is the provision of policing assistance by one police service to another. It is based on a formal agreement and is usually in response to, or in anticipation of, a major incident/event or to offer small scale inter-force support.
- 5.36. In previous years the issue of mutual aid has arisen within the pay review process as an agreed and accepted case for the continued maintenance of pay parity. The PFNI have previously noted the relatively low levels of mutual aid deployment to the PSNI (with the exception of times of high demand typically resulting from periods of extreme public disorder i.e., as witnessed in 2013 and in 2021), whilst also acknowledging the importance of the continued ability of the PSNI to be able to draw upon assistance from other forces when required, without any unnecessary barriers. Requests for assistance from the PSNI to other UK forces also remain relatively low, however with high profile events such as the G7 Summit and COP26 in 2021, requests for assistance from the PSNI did increase, instigating a renewed focus on the allowances payable to PSNI officers who are deployed as mutual aid support.
- 5.37. The current guidance governing the conditions and entitlements of PSNI officers deployed as mutual aid support is based upon the 'Hertfordshire Agreement' and PNB agreements dating from 1986, 1988 and 1995. Not only are the details within this agreement significantly out of date and therefore not fit for purpose in the year 2022, but they no longer form the basis of the guidelines adhered to by *any* other UK police force. The PSNI are the only police service which continue to operate its mutual aid functions based upon this agreement. The PFNI therefore recommend that the Hertfordshire Agreement on mutual aid is abolished within the PSNI and is replaced with a system which mirrors the allowances provided to officers in England and Wales who undertake mutual aid deployments. This is in keeping with the principle of pay parity.

Recommendation 6

That the Hertfordshire Agreement used by the PSNI to determine the conditions and entitlements of officers deployed as mutual aid support is abolished and replaced with a system which mirrors the allowances provided to officers in England and Wales.

- 5.38. Under current Hertfordshire Agreement arrangements PSNI officers who are deployed as mutual aid support and who are 'held in reserve' are applicable for a 'Standby

Allowance' which equates to £7.50 for each rostered period of standby (a maximum of one period in 24 hours) for which an officer sleeps at a place of duty away from their private residence under authorisation to be immediately available for duty if required in an emergency. In addition to this, officers *may* also be entitled to a 'Hardship Allowance' of £33 per night, where it would have been possible to provide 'proper sleeping accommodation' but this was not achieved. So out of date is this agreement, that the definition of 'proper sleeping accommodation', as currently utilised by the PSNI, includes 'the provision of beds and bedding under cover, with access to washing and toilet facilities and with adequate heating and ventilation according to the season'. This agreement further states that where there has been time to upgrade accommodation prior to, or subsequent to, the time when it became known that the reserve duty was to be undertaken, the definition of 'proper sleeping accommodation' shall be replaced by the definition of a 'higher standard accommodation' which states that the 'provision of beds (which could be camp beds) and bedding under a roof; average of 50 square feet per officer (40 square feet where four or fewer officers are accommodated in the same room); not more than eight officers per shift per wash basin; not more than 10 officers per shift per toilet (WC – not urinal); not more than 15 officers per shift per shower head/bath; adequate heating/ventilation according to the season; and the rooms used for sleeping not also to be used simultaneously for recreation or other purposes'. Based upon this agreement PSNI officers who are required to travel and stay away from their home, in order to assist another police force in their public duty, are entitled to £7.50 compensation per night, potentially increasing to £40.50 per night if they are forced to sleep in accommodation not deemed as 'proper' in 1988.

- 5.39. In contrast, officers in England and Wales who are deployed as mutual aid support to another force are entitled to a compensatory payment of £50 per night 'Away from Home Overnight Allowance' where an officer is 'held in reserve' i.e., is serving away from his/her normal place of duty and is required to stay in a particular, specified place rather than being allowed to return home by reason of the need to be ready for immediate deployment. Please note that serving away because of attendance at a training course is not considered as being 'held in reserve'. In addition to this, officers may be entitled to an additional £30 per night 'Hardship Allowance' where the accommodation provided does not meet minimum standards. Contrary to the dated criteria used by the PSNI, proper sleeping accommodation in England and Wales simply refers to a single occupancy room for the sole occupation of the officer, with an en-suite bathroom. A more fitting set of criteria for the 21st century. Based upon this agreement officers are entitled to £50 compensation per night, potentially increasing to £80 if they are not provided with a room of their own. This is a stark difference to the provisions for PSNI officers.

- 5.40. By way of a further comparison, and in indicating how far behind the provisions in the PSNI have fallen relative to other UK police forces, officers in Scotland who are deployed as mutual aid support have access to a further enhanced package which we believe more adequately and fairly compensates officers for the disruption of staying away from home in order to serve the public, whilst also considering the significant restrictions placed on officers during their deployment. In Scotland the 'Overnight Disruption Allowance' is paid in two tiers. Firstly, an officer who is practically unable to, or is prevented from, returning home because of the need to perform duty away from their usual place of duty is eligible for a payment of £63.90 per night. In addition, officers may claim a further £42.60 'Additional Disruption Allowance' (a total of £106.50) if, further to being away from home, there are also restrictions placed on their off-duty activities for operational or security reasons or they are required to be available for recall to duty at any time during this period. This compares to £7.50 in the PSNI and £50 within England and Wales. Further to this, officers in Scotland also have access to the 'Minimum Standards Allowance' which is valued at £95.85 per night (compared to £30 in England and Wales and £33 in the PSNI) payable where the accommodation provided is not of the minimum standard i.e., single occupancy and en-suite.
- 5.41. However, in keeping with the desire to maintain the fundamentals of pay parity with officers in England and Wales, the PFNI recommend that the 'Standby Allowance' of £7.50 currently utilised by the PSNI as payment to an officer who sleeps at a place of duty away from their private residence under authorisation to be immediately available for duty if required in an emergency, is abolished and replaced with the 'Away from Home Overnight Allowance', currently valued at £50 per night, as used in England and Wales.

Recommendation 7

That the Standby Allowance currently utilised by the PSNI as payment to an officer who sleeps at a place of duty away from their private residence under authorisation to be immediately available for duty if required in an emergency, is abolished and replaced with the Away from Home Overnight Allowance, currently valued at £50 per night, as used in England and Wales.

- 5.42. However, whilst the definition of 'held in reserve' (which forms the basis of the payment of the 'Away from Home Overnight Allowance') in England and Wales refers to an officer who 'is serving away from his/her normal place of duty and is required to stay in a particular, specified place rather than being allowed to return home by reason of the need to be ready for immediate deployment' should also apply in NI, the PFNI believe this must also include an additional element which covers an inability to return home for practical reasons due to geography/location. This is particularly important for

PSNI officers due to their physical location relative to other UK forces. The PFNI are content that the definition of 'held in reserve' in NI would not include officers involved in training courses or carrying out routine enquiries, as is currently the case in England and Wales.

Recommendation 8

That the 'held in reserve' definition to be used to determine the eligibility of officers for the Away from Home Overnight Allowance includes 'an officer who is serving away from his/her normal place of duty and is required to stay in a particular, specified place rather than being allowed to return home by reason of the need to be ready for immediate deployment' alongside provisions for officers who are unable to return home for practical reasons due to geography/location.

- 5.43. In addition to the replacement of the 'Standby Allowance' and the adaption of the definition of 'held in reserve', as applicable in NI, the PFNI recommend that the out-of-date criteria currently utilised in determining the applicability of the 'Hardship Allowance' and the definition of 'proper' and 'higher' sleeping accommodation by the PSNI is modernised and brought into line with that currently used by all forces in England and Wales. This would increase the minimum standard of accommodation required for officers deployed in a mutual aid role to a single occupancy room with en-suite facilities and remove any dated references to square footage, and 'access' to toilet facilities and ventilation. Any alternative to this recommendation should not even be open for consideration in the year 2022.

Recommendation 9

That the out-of-date criteria currently utilised in determining the applicability of the 'Hardship Allowance' and the definition of 'proper' and 'higher' sleeping accommodation by the PSNI is modernised and brought into line with that currently used by all forces in England and Wales.

- 5.44. The PFNI have made the above recommendations in keeping with the desire for continued pay parity with officers in England and Wales. However, it seems important to highlight that although the move to bring these allowances into line with England and Wales would be a marked improvement upon the current arrangements within the PSNI, we believe they do not go far enough to adequately compensating officers for being away from home and the level of restriction which are inevitably placed on them whilst providing mutual aid support. We are aware of discussions in England and Wales to improve the mutual aid entitlements offered, and as such the PFNI recommend that as and when these improvements are implemented in England and Wales, this should also automatically apply to the provisions within the PSNI.

Recommendation 10

That as and when improvements are made to the mutual aid allowances in England and Wales, these should automatically apply to the provisions within the PSNI.

- 5.45. On a final point, please note that PFNI are requesting that the PRRB make a formal recommendation on these issues, rather than simply reverting them for discussion with the Department for Justice (DoJ) or to the Police Advisory Group NI (PAGNI). This only serves to delay decision-making (which as previously noted is already a significant problem in NI) as stakeholders continue to seek the guidance of an independent recommendation from the body which was set up to consider issues of pay, terms and conditions within the PSNI.

6. REFERENCE DATA

Figure 1: PSNI Recorded Crime Statistics - Total recorded crime in NI, 2012/13 - 2019/20, including linear trendline

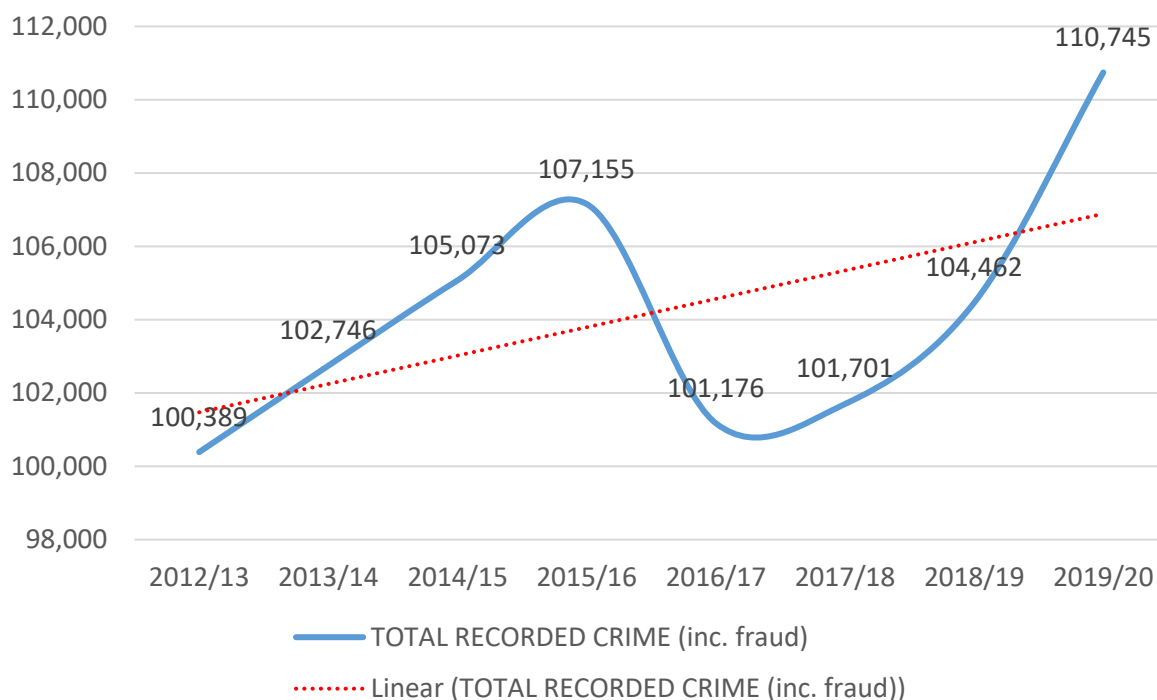


Figure 2: PSNI Strength of Police Service Statistics, FTE Officer Numbers, 2001-2022

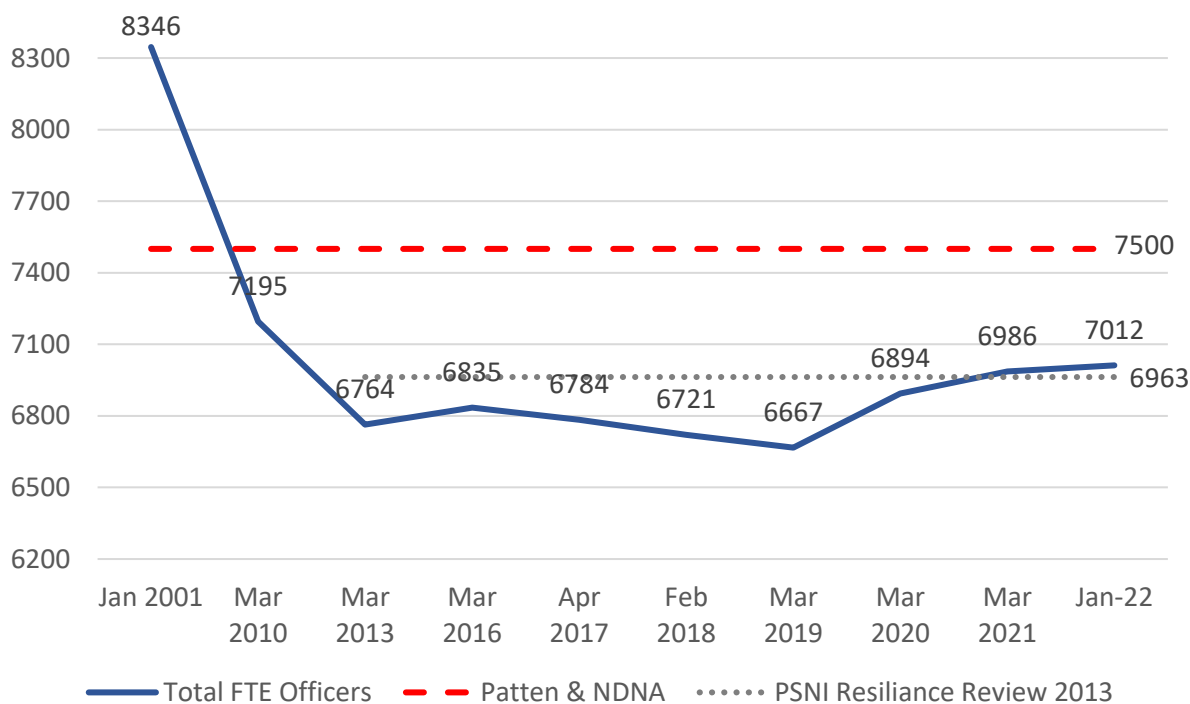


Figure 1: PSNI Data (unpublished), Officer outflow by reason, 2011/12 - 2021/22 (December)

Year	Reason	Total	Year	Reason	Total	Year	Reason	Total
2011/12	Dismissal	10	2015/16	Dismissal	19	2019/20	Dismissal	6
	Medical (<30)	24		Medical (<30)	45		Medical	88
	Medical (30+)	0		Medical (30+)	3		Resigned	55
	Resigned	32		Resigned	48		Retired	203
	Retired	40		Retired	218		Death	6
	Death	4		Death	3		Total	358
	Total	110		Total	336			
2012/13	Dismissal	11	2016/17	Dismissal	12	2020/21	Dismissal	5
	Medical (<30)	38		Medical (<30)	52		Medical (<30)	58
	Medical (30+)	3		Medical (30+)	1		Medical (30+)	3
	Resigned	45		Resigned	41		Resigned	43
	Retired	89		Retired	206		Retired	156
	Death	3		Death	5		Death	4
	Total	189		Total	317		Total	269
2013/14	Dismissal	12	2017/18	Dismissal	13	2021/22 (Dec)	Dismissal	10
	Medical (<30)	33		Medical (<30)	76		Medical (<30)	61
	Medical (30+)	1		Medical (30+)	56		Medical (30+)	6
	Resigned	48		Resigned	217		Resigned	67
	Retired	122		Retired	2		Retired	139
	Death	1		Death	364		Death	3
	Total	217		Total	13		Total	286
2014/15	Dismissal	5	2018/19	Dismissal	12			
	Medical (<30)	44		Medical	62			
	Medical (30+)	1		Resigned	54			
	Resigned	44		Retired	278			
	Retired	188		Death	2			
	Death	2		Total	408			
	Total	284						

Figure 2: Pre-detailed and casual overtime hours, PSNI 2013/14 - 2021/22 (December)

Year	Pre-detailed overtime hours	Casual overtime hours	Total overtime hours
2013/14	2,342,722	24,160	2,366,882
2014/15	1,782,936	23,870	1,806,806
2015/16	1,726,122	37,933	1,764,055
2016/17	1,753,510	34,252	1,787,762
2017/18	1,553,950	38,189	1,592,139
2018/19	1,418,736	38,935	1,457,670
2019/20	1,389,525	45,981	1,435,506
2020/21	1,196,897	29,703	1,226,600
2021/22 (Dec)	994,006	25,265	1,019,271

Figure 3: Total number of On-Call units and number of officers claiming On-Call allowance 2017/18 to 2020/21

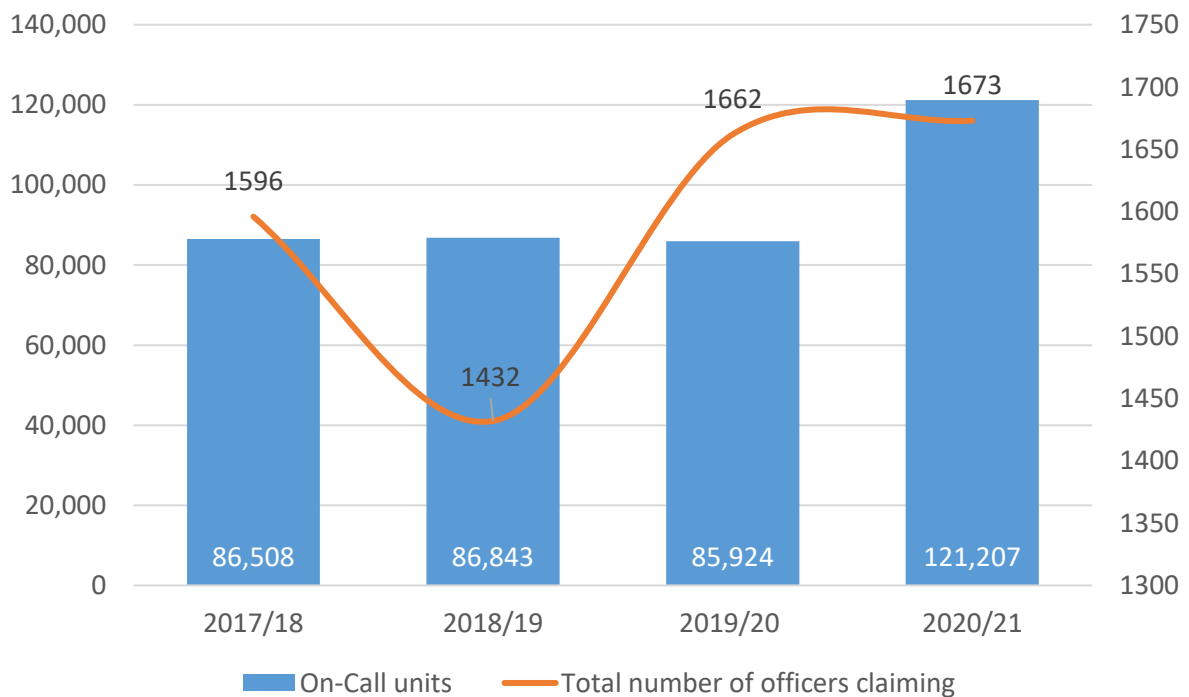


Figure 4: Average Working Days Lost, PSNI Officers & NI Civil Service, 2011/12 to 2020/21

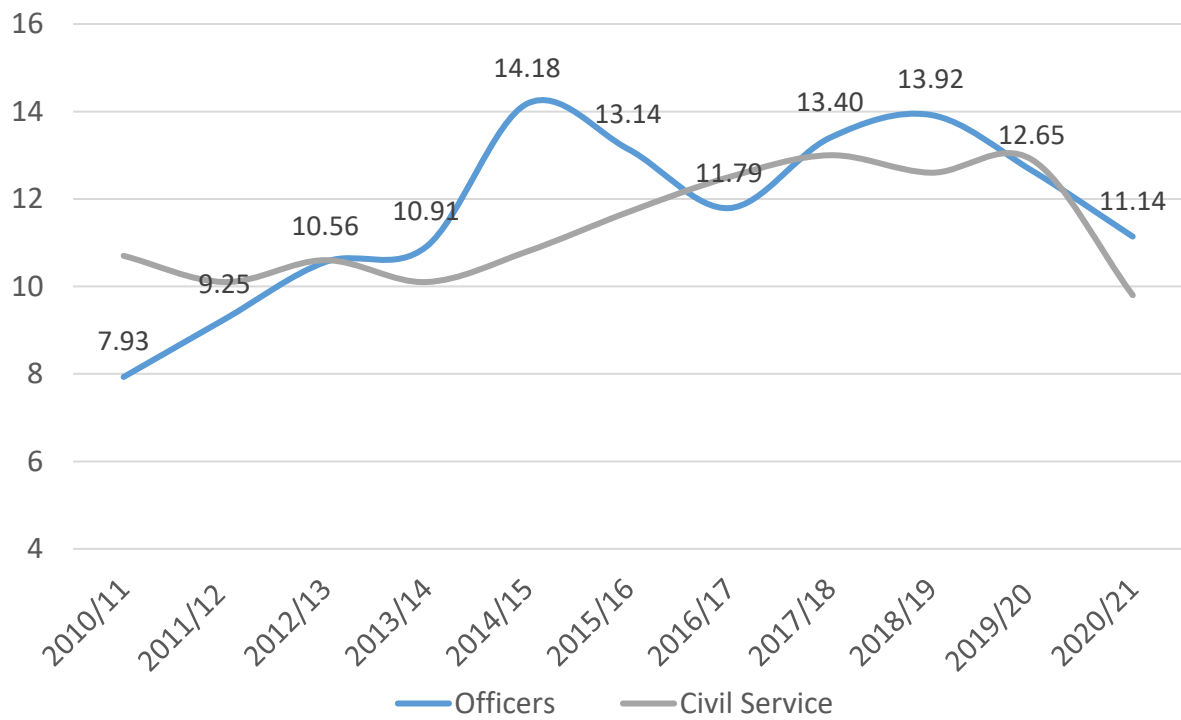
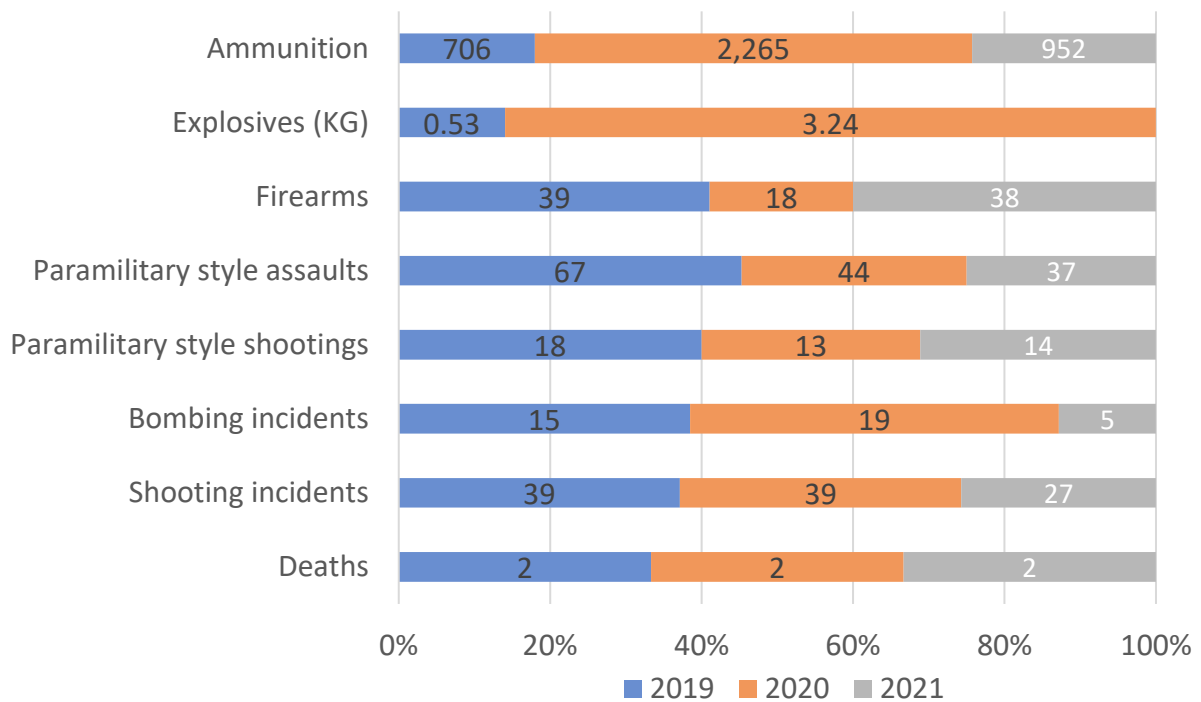


Figure 5: Security Statistics, NI 2019-2021



7. APPENDICIES

Appendix A – NI Remit Letter

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Minister's Office Block B,
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3SG
Tel: 028 9076 5725
DOJ.MinistersOffice@justice-ni.gov.uk

Our ref: SUB-0021-2022

Zoë Billingham
Chair
Police Remuneration Review Body
Office of Manpower Economics
3rd Floor, Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
LONDON
SW1H 0TL

24 January 2022

Dear Zoë

First, I would like to thank the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for the work undertaken in support of the 2021/22 pay process. I can confirm that I approved the increase to the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance for all Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) officers and an uplift to pay point 0 of the constable scale as contained in the 7th report. I have invited all relevant pay remits from employers and await receipt of these. Once remits have completed the approvals process I will advise you as soon as possible so that the Northern Ireland report may be published on your website.

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



I should be grateful if the PRRB would now commence its annual review in respect of officers of the PSNI for 2022/23, in conjunction with that for police officers in England and Wales.

- I have had sight of the Home Secretary's remit letter for officers in England and Wales and note her position. I remain in favour of maintaining the principle of broad alignment on police pay between the different jurisdictions and therefore seek your consideration as to how to apply the pay award for 2022/23 for all police officers in the PSNI. In addition, your consideration is sought regarding the regular elements of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) and Dog Handlers' Allowance.
- The Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) has also raised the issue of the pay scale for Assistant Chief Constables (ACCs) in Northern Ireland, following a decline in the number of applicants for the recent ACC competition. The Board is currently considering the outcome of a review of these issues and will be in a position to present its findings to you during the evidence gathering process. While recognising this would represent a departure from the longstanding desire for broad alignment, I have taken the view that it would be appropriate to seek your consideration, following their presentation of this evidence, on whether it is appropriate to consider a locally agreed salary band for the ACC position in the PSNI.
- The PSNI recently provided assistance to their colleagues in Scotland, during COP 26 in Glasgow. The Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) is now asking that mutual aid payments and allowances payable to PSNI officers during such aid are in line with payments made to other UK police forces. PSNI is currently the only UK police force which adheres to the former "Hertfordshire Agreement" for Mutual Aid, whereas we understand all other forces in the UK have moved to a revised agreement from around 2014 following the Winsor review. While assistance is relatively infrequent, it seems an opportune time to

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



consider the issue given that PSNI sits outside the revised arrangements, yet engages in requests for assistance from other parts of the UK. With this in mind, I would be grateful for your recommendations on this matter.

With regards to the Review of Allowances, which incorporated the On-Call, Dog Handlers, Motor Vehicle and the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance as well as the Competence Related Threshold Payment we can advise that this exercise commenced in October 2021 and it is anticipated the final report will be provided to the Department in the coming weeks. Evidence regarding the outcome of this review will be provided to the PRRB in the course of both written and oral evidence sessions.

As in previous years, I would also invite you to have regard to PRRB's standing terms of reference. While the Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay Policy has not yet been set for 2022/23, it will be important to take this and wider affordability issues into consideration.

I can confirm that, pending formal publication of your report, stakeholders received a copy of the PRRB's last report, shared in confidence on 1 September 2021, to inform preparation of their written evidence.

We would welcome receipt of your eighth report and recommendations by the end of June 2022. I look forward to working with you and your members in support of the process for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

NAOMI LONG MLA
Minister of Justice

Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.

Appendix B – England and Wales Remit Letter



Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Andy Bliss QPM
Interim Chair
Police Remuneration Review Body
Office of Manpower Economics
3rd Floor
Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

BY EMAIL ONLY

2nd December 2021

Dear Andy

Police Remuneration Review Body Remit 2022/23

I would like to offer my thanks to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for your work in the last pay round and for your considered and thoughtful observations on police officer pay in your 2021 report.

The PRRB will continue to have a key role to play in advising the Government on pay and conditions, and on proposals for pay reform. Your independent and expert advice in these matters is most valued.

I refer to the PRRB the following matters in the 2022/23 pay round:

- How to apply the pay award for 2022/23 for police officers of all ranks, including chief officers.
- To provide commentary and observations on the National Police Chiefs' Council's reference document that will provide a detailed explanation of: the methodologies used to benchmark the pay of all ranks including chief officers; the factors used to determine the P-factor and the methodology used to value it; the interaction of benchmarking and the P-factor; its overall purpose; and example calculations, addressing the points raised in your last report.
- To provide updated views on force readiness to implement the pay progression standard.

I ask that your recommendations and observations are considered in the context of the Government's commitment to increase police officer numbers by 20,000 over three years.

The Government must balance the need to ensure fair pay for public sector workers with protecting funding for frontline services and ensuring affordability for taxpayers. We must ensure that the affordability of a pay award is taken into consideration so that police forces are able to maximise the number of additional officers that they can recruit.

In considering the appropriate level of pay for police officers I would also ask you to have regard to the standing terms of reference as set out in previous remit letters.

Thank you for your hard work in this important area. I look forward to receiving your report in May 2022.

With all your wishes


Rt Hon Priti Patel MP