

Firearms Survey

2023

MOPAC Evidence & Insight



MAYOR OF LONDON

OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

Overview of the Firearms Survey 2023

About the Survey

- In response to Lord Harris' 2022 review of London's preparedness to deal with a major terrorist incident, MOPAC and the Metropolitan Police Service conducted a **survey of firearms officers**. Previous waves of this survey took place in 2014 and 2017, allowing for benchmarking over time.
- The most recent wave took place from 4th August to 21st September 2023. **951 officers gave their views across a range of topics** – including perceptions of their work environment, occupational health and support, equipment and training, work-life balance, the media, and preparedness to deal with terrorist threats.

Key Findings

- Improvements were seen across many of the areas covered by the Lord Harris Review 2022 Recommendation. Compared with 2017, more armed officers now felt they **did enough training** and **had the right equipment to deal with a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA)**. Despite this progress, *only half* responded positively about their equipment and training for an MTA, whilst armed officers were also still divided about the suitability of their weapons more widely.
- Compared with 2017, more armed officers were familiar with plans for an **Operation Plato activation**. However, confidence in responding to a **Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN)** threat was low – with only a third feeling they had enough training to deal with such an event.
- Although armed officers were positive about their immediate team, far fewer felt **supported by the Metropolitan Police Service as a whole** or by **the Government** or the **Mayor of London and his Office**. Reflecting some of the themes raised by the recent Casey Review 2023, officers held mixed opinions of the culture and standards in their command: whilst nearly all felt *personally* confident to **challenge inappropriate behaviour**, fewer felt it was **dealt with effectively** and only half believed their command was making the **right progress to improve professionalism**. Compared with 2017, armed officers were also less likely to say they felt **proud of their role** or that there was a **good working environment** in their command.
- **Public support** and **media coverage** have become increasing areas of concern over recent years. Compared with 2017, fewer armed officers said they felt **respected by the public** or believed **the armed response made the public feel safer**, whilst more were concerned about **being judged by the media**. Media coverage had also become an increasing **operational consideration**, whilst the majority of armed officers were specifically worried about **social media**.
- Results on **armed officer wellbeing** were mixed. Despite an increase since 2017, *only half* of armed officers said they felt able to **seek help without being judged**. In turn, the vast majority were *not* confident in **post-incident support** or **services offered by Occupational Health**, whilst many felt their home-life and wellbeing had been detrimentally impacted by their work.

Levers to Change

- Looking across the survey questions as a whole, armed officers were *most confident* in their own abilities to do their job (i.e. their personal ability to carry a weapon and to cope with the demands of their role) and the support offered within their immediate team. However, views were more *divided* on culture and equipment – some of the key areas covered by the Casey Review 2023 – whilst armed officers were *least confident* in wider organisational, governmental and public support and media scrutiny. **Different armed commands saw different patterns of responses across these areas** – highlighting unique risks and opportunities for individual teams to focus on.
- New analysis reveals that many of the areas covered by the survey serve as **levers to change to drive wider improvements to armed policing**: increasing external and organisational backing for armed officers is key to boosting their pride in their role; whilst a better work-life balance will help drive officer retention.

About the Survey

Background

The ever-changing nature of armed policing and the terrorist threat to London has driven the development of a **dedicated firearms survey** conducted by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service. Fieldwork for the most recent wave of this survey took place from 4th August to 21st September 2023*, and followed previous waves conducted in February 2014 and November 2017. The survey was undertaken in response to Recommendation 22 of Lord Harris' updated review of London's preparedness to deal with a major terrorist incident (2022), and followed the publication of the Baroness Casey Review (2023) that placed a focus on standards and culture in Metropolitan Police Service armed commands.

Methodology



Fieldwork took place in August-September 2023*. The survey was hosted online, and was disseminated to accredited firearms officers in the Metropolitan Police Service via email distribution lists.

Response Rate

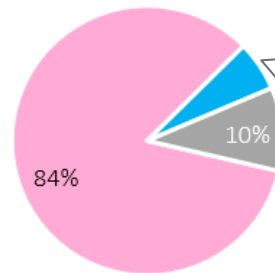
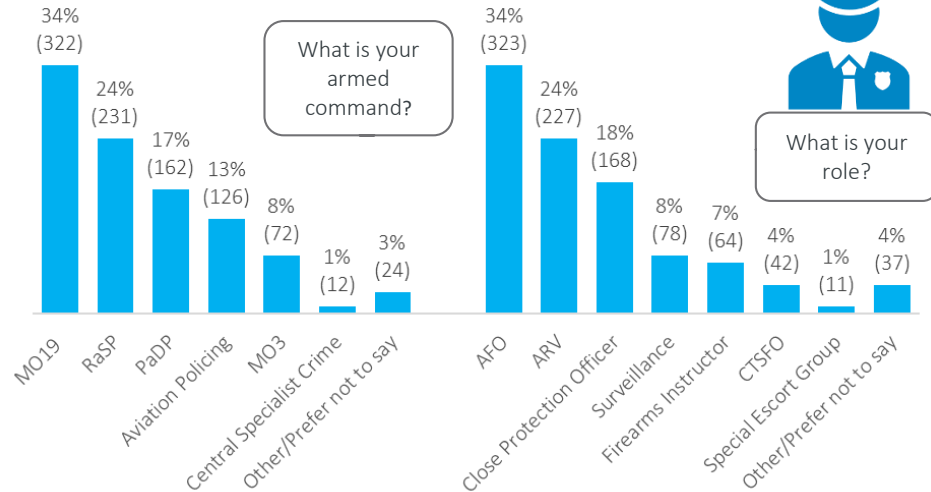


951

Armed officers in the MPS took part in the survey - 31% of the headcount of accredited officers at August 2023 (3073). This response rate is broadly in line with 2017 (33%).

Sample Demographics

Responses were received across all armed commands – with officers most often part of MO19 and RASp and Specialist Protection (RaSP). Most respondents said they were Police Constable (PC) rank (71%).



■ Male
■ Female
■ Other/Prefer not to say

6% of respondents were female (55).



31% had been an armed officer for less than 5 years (289).

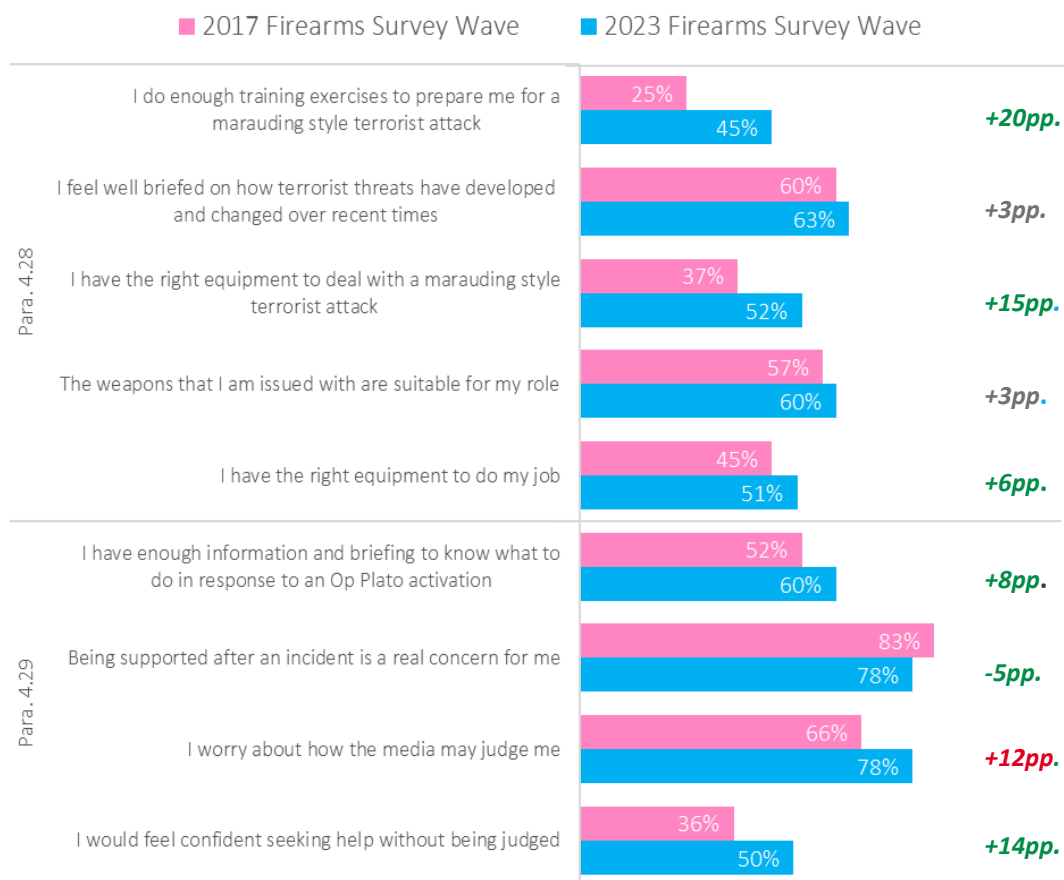
Statistical note: All differences in this report are statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.05$ level unless otherwise stated. 'Don't know' and 'prefer not to say' responses are routinely excluded, whilst OCU breakdowns also **exclude Central Specialist Crime** due to low base numbers. Please note that base numbers for MO3 and Females are low throughout.

*Please note that fieldwork for the 2023 wave of this survey was closed on 21st September; *one day* following the announcement that a Metropolitan Police Service firearms officer would be charged with murder following a fatal shooting (<https://www.inquest.org.uk/chris-kaba-cps-decision>). Please also note that the 2017 wave of the survey took place in the aftermath of several high-profile terrorist attacks in the city, including London Bridge and Westminster.

Summary – the 2022 Lord Harris Review Recommendation

Progress against the 2022 Lord Harris Review Recommendation

In 2022, Lord Toby Harris published 'London Prepared' - an independent review into London's Preparedness to respond to a major terrorist incident. This updated review outlined a number of new recommendations, including that the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service should consider re-running its survey of firearms officers to understand the extent to which several issues were still relevant to the landscape of armed policing (Recommendation 22).



This page summarises progress against key survey measures outlined in the 2022 Review.

Progress on Equipment and Training

Considerable improvements have been seen in the proportion of armed officers believing they **do enough training exercises** (+20pp.) and **have the right equipment to deal with a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA)** (+15pp.). In turn, more officers now also feel confident that they **know what to do in response to an Op Plato activation** (+8pp.). Despite this progress levels remain relatively low – with only around half of armed officers responding positively about their training and equipment for an MTA.

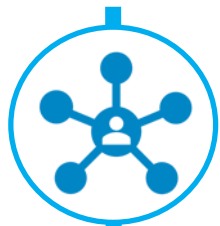
Progress on Post-incident Support

In turn, the vast majority of officers are still **concerned about post-incident support** (78%). Although it is encouraging that more now say they would **feel confident seeking help** (+14pp.), concerns about media coverage remain prominent: nearly four in five officers say they are **worried about how the media may judge them** (78%), and this result stands 12 percentage points above 2017. Further information on officers' perceptions of accountability and scrutiny is on page 17.

*Green/red percentage point (pp) change indicates statistically significant differences at $p \leq 0.05$.

Lord Toby Harris (2022). London Prepared: a city-wide endeavour. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/harris_review_-_march_2022_web.pdf

Summary – Key Findings



The Work Environment (page 6-7)

- Armed officers generally felt **supported by their colleagues, their team and their line manager**; but were less likely to feel **supported by the wider MPS**. Less than one in ten felt their work was supported by the **Government**, and just 1% felt supported by the **Mayor of London and his Office**. Only half believed **there was a positive working environment in their command** (47%) – a decline of 8 percentage points vs. 2017.
- Armed officers have become increasingly concerned about public support for their role, with only one in five now believing **they are respected by the public** (20%). This represents *a decline of 30 percentage points since 2017*, whilst fewer also believe **the armed response makes the public feel safer** or that **the public have confidence in MPS post-incident procedures** (both down 9pp.).
- When considered in light of the Casey Review 2023, armed officers were divided as to whether they felt **the right progress was being made in their command to ensure the highest standards of professionalism** (50%). Although the majority of officers felt personally confident in challenging inappropriate behaviour, fewer believed it was **dealt with effectively** (70%) – with lower levels in RaSP and Aviation Policing.



Occupational Health and Wellbeing (page 8)

- In line with 2017, many armed officers were *not confident* in the support offered by Occupational Health, whilst only a third felt they **should undergo formal health checks with their GP to ensure they were fit to carry a firearm** (35%).
- Just half of armed officers said they **would feel confident seeking help without being judged** (50%). This represents a 14 percentage point increase when compared with 2017, but officers in RaSP were least likely to say they would be able to seek help (40%). The vast majority of armed officers continued to say they **would be concerned about being supported after an incident** (78%).



Shift Patterns, Overtime and Work-Life Balance (page 9-10)

- Most armed officers were **happy with their shift pattern** (82%), but 57% said **their home or family life had suffered as a result of their working hours**. In turn, officers were divided about their work-life balance: 44% believed they **currently had a 'good' work-life balance overall**. Officers in RaSP were *less likely* to respond positively on flexibility and the impact of work on family life.
- Armed officers also held mixed views on compulsory overtime, with half believing **it had negatively impacted their wellbeing** (48%).



Officer Recruitment and Retention (page 10)

- Two-thirds of armed officers said **they intend to be working in an MPS firearms role three years from now** (66%) – broadly in line with the overall MPS level in the latest Staff Survey (62% in October 2022).
- However, around a third believed **a lack of flexible working opportunities put people off applying for firearms roles** (32%), with females significantly more likely than males to feel this was a barrier (53% vs. 31%).



Summary – Key Findings (cont'd)



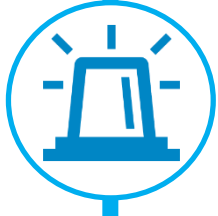
Equipment, Weapons, Training and Fitness (page 11-12)

- In line with 2017, officers remained divided about **the suitability of their weapons** (60%).
- More officers now believed **their training equipped them to do their job** (80%, +10pp); seemingly driven by improved perceptions of continuation training. Although most armed officers believed the **fitness level required for their role was 'about right'** (66%), female officers were more likely to feel it was 'too high' and that fitness requirements served as a barrier to progression.



Media and Social Media (page 13)

- Concerns about the media may have become *increasingly influential* to the operational environment over recent years, with the proportion of armed officers feeling **it was a consideration during an operation** (79%) and that **recent media coverage influenced how they did their job** (64%) both increasing by around 10 percentage points when compared with 2017.
- New questions reveal that many armed officers are also worried about social media, with three-quarters saying they would be **worried about members of the public filming them at a scene and sharing the footage online** (74%).



Preparedness to Respond to Changing Terrorist Threats (page 14-15)

- When compared with 2017, more officers now believed they **had the right equipment** (+15pp.) and **did enough training** (+20pp) **to deal with a Marauding Terrorist Attack** (MTA). Despite these improvements, only around half of armed officers responded positively here.
- Improvements were also seen in officers' understanding of Operation Plato, with more saying they **have enough information to know what to do in response to an activation** (+8pp. to 60%) and **feeling familiar with their own command's Plans** (+6pp. to 59%).
- However, armed officers' confidence with Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) threats was *far lower*: only a third felt they **had sufficient training for a CBRN event** (31%), whilst just one in five **felt confident deploying CBRN equipment** (19%).



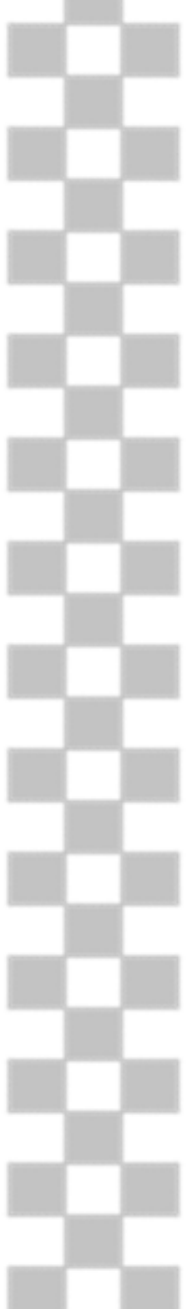
Partnership Working and Interoperability (page 16)

- Most armed officers felt they **worked well with other police forces and emergency service partners** (74%) and recognised the benefits that multi-agency training exercises could bring to **build relationships** (81%) and **improve officer confidence** (71%).
- However, just 41% agreed that **they had enough opportunities for multi-agency training exercises**; whilst 42% disagreed. PaDP officers responded *least positively* about here, with just 15% feeling they had enough opportunities.



Areas of Opportunity and Levers to Change (page 18)

- Looking back across the survey as a whole, officers were *most positive* about their **own capabilities** and their **team support**, and were *least positive* about **external support** and the **media**. Improvements to different areas will act as **levers to change**, and will bring wider benefits to armed policing – including on officer retention, feelings of safety on duty, and job pride.



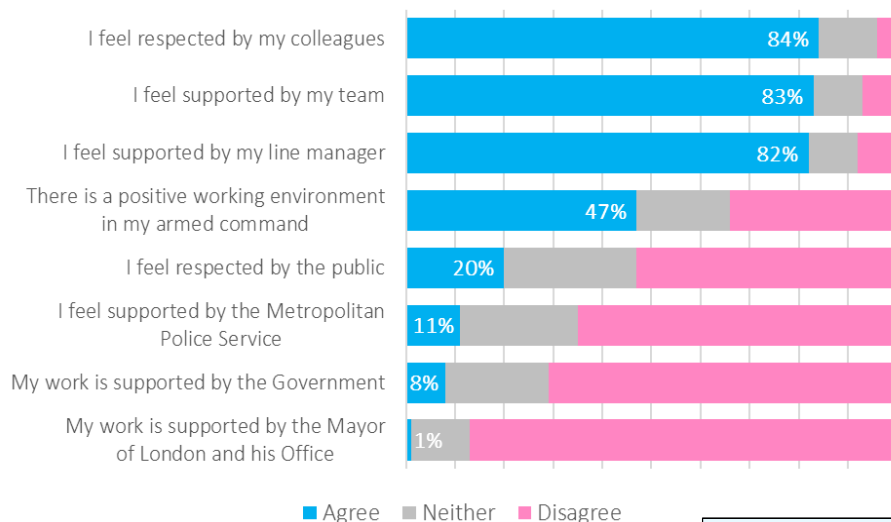
Work Environment: Support and Personal Resilience

Armed officers felt supported by colleagues and line managers, but were less positive about wider organisational or political support. When compared with 2017, fewer armed officers now felt proud of their role or respected by the public.

Support in the Work Environment

Armed officers were generally positive about their immediate work environment; most felt **supported by their team** (83%) and **by their line manager** (82%).

However, officers were less confident in wider support for their role. Only one in ten felt **supported by the Metropolitan Police Service** (11%) – a decline of 12 percentage points since 2017 – whilst even fewer felt **supported by Government** or **by the Mayor of London and his Office**. This wave, just one in five armed officers said they felt **respected by the public** (20%); 30 percentage points lower than in 2017.

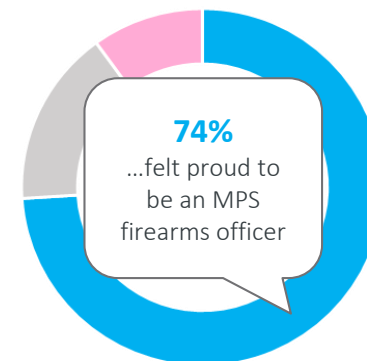


Only half of armed officers believed there was a **positive work environment in their command** (47%), with this measure standing 8 percentage points below the last wave in 2017. Large differences were also seen here across armed commands: whilst 83% of MO3 believed there was a positive work environment, this fell to just 26% of PaDP.

% positive working environment	
MO3	83%
Aviation	71%
MO19	45%
RaSP	37%
PaDP	26%

Personal Resilience

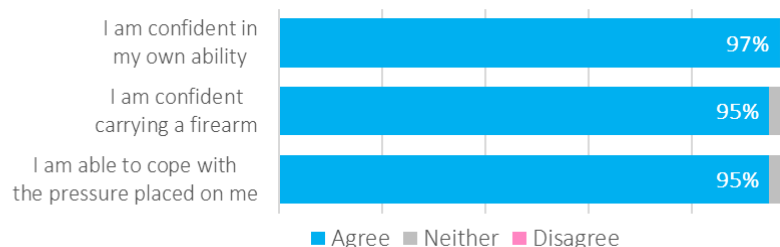
Three-quarters of armed officers said they **felt proud in their role** (74%); but this result stands 12 percentage points below levels seen the last time the survey was run in 2017. Large differences were once again seen across armed commands, with officers in PaDP *least likely* to feel proud.



% proud to be an MPS firearms officer	
MO19	81%
MO3	76%
Aviation	76%
RaSP	75%
PaDP	60%

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

Despite this, nearly all armed officers felt **confident in their own abilities** (97%) – including to **carry a firearm** (95%) and to **cope with pressures placed on them** (95%). Results for these measures are broadly in line with those seen in 2017 and were high across commands.



■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

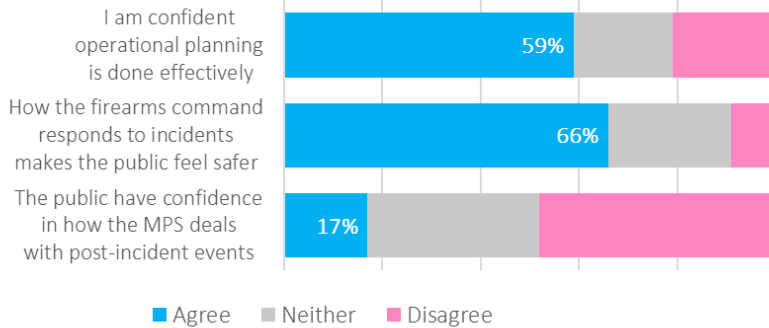
Work Environment: Operational Context and Professional Standards

Compared with 2017, officers were now less confident in public support for armed operations. Officers held mixed views towards professional standards: although most felt confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour, fewer believed it was dealt with effectively in their command.

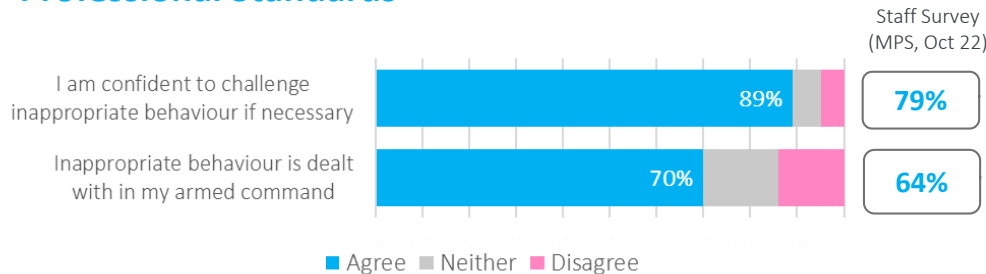
The Operational Context

Armed officers were divided in their views of operational planning, with just 59% **confident it is done effectively**. Those in Aviation Policing (70%) and MO19 (69%) were far more likely to feel confident in operational planning than those in PaDP (32%).

Although two-thirds believed the **armed response to incidents made the public feel safer** (66%), less than one in five armed officers believed **the public had confidence in how the MPS dealt with post-incident events** (17%). Results for both of these measures have declined by 9 percentage points since 2017. This echoes the earlier reduction in officers feeling respected by the public, and reveals worsening perceptions of public confidence in armed operations.



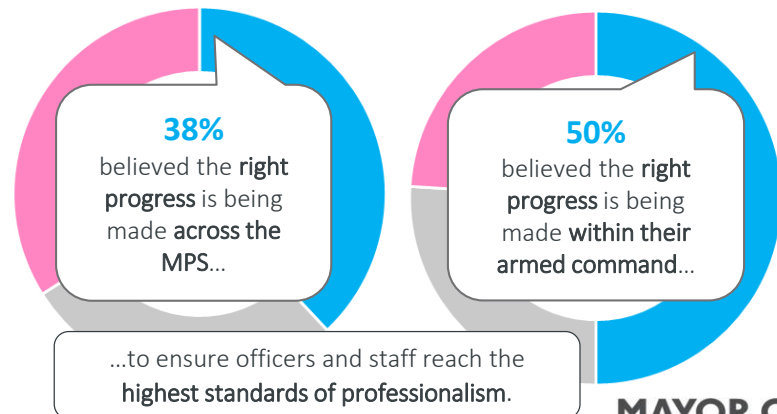
Professional Standards



	% inappropriate behaviour is dealt with
MO3	81%
MO19	77%
PaDP	71%
RaSP	61%
Aviation	60%

Echoing some of the themes in the Casey Review 2023, results reveal a *mixed picture* of professional standards. Positively, the vast majority of armed officers said they felt **confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour if necessary** (89%), and this was high across armed commands. However, fewer believed **inappropriate behaviour was dealt with** (70%). Although these levels were above those seen for the MPS in the Staff Survey (October 2022), officers in RaSP and Aviation Policing were less confident that behaviour was dealt with.

Furthermore, only half of armed officers believed **the right progress was being made in their command to reach the highest standards of professionalism** (50%). Whilst this stood above the proportion feeling confident in progress being made across the MPS as a whole, considerable differences were once again seen across commands, with results for MO3 (71%) significantly higher than those seen in RaSP and PaDP (both 44%).

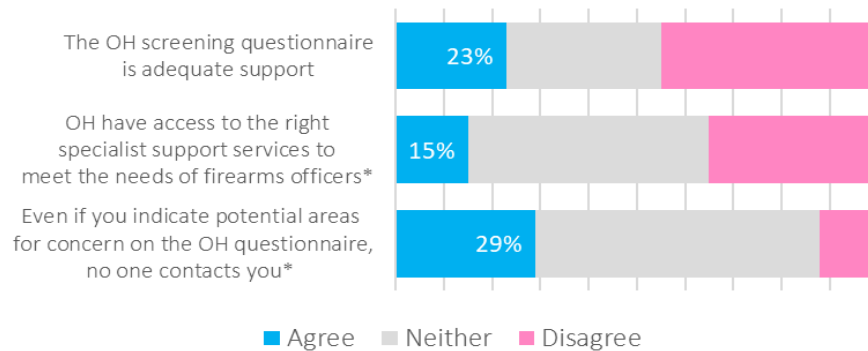


Occupational Health and Wellbeing

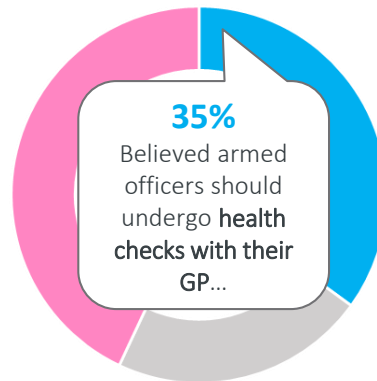
Many armed officers were not confident in the services offered by Occupational Health. Despite an increase this wave, only half of armed officers said they would feel confident seeking help without being judged, whilst the majority are still concerned about post-incident support.

Occupational Health

In line with the previous wave in 2017, many armed officers were *not* confident in Occupational Health (OH) processes. Only a quarter believed **the OH screening questionnaire was adequate support** (23%), and even fewer felt **OH had access to the right specialist services for armed officers** (15%).

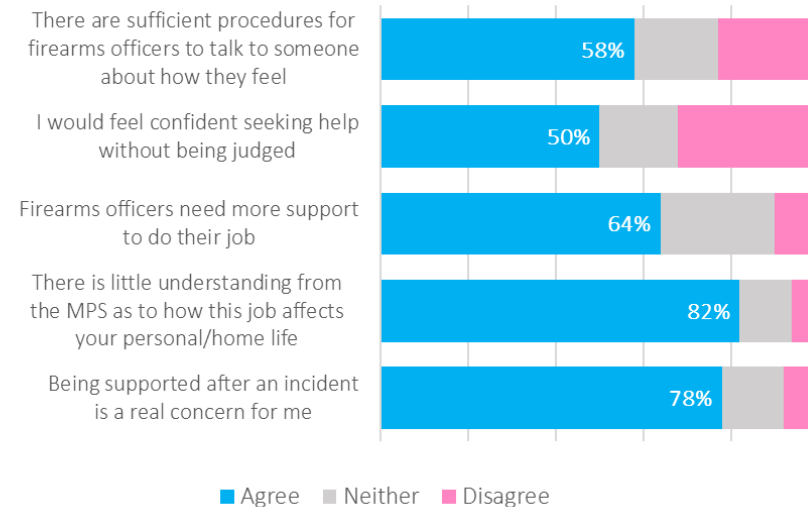


Support for GP medical checks was also low, with only a third believing **armed police officers should undergo health checks with their GP to ensure they are fit to carry a firearm** (35%).



Wellbeing and Support

Only around half of armed officers believed there were **sufficient procedures in place to talk to someone about how they feel** (58%) or that **they would feel confident seeking help** (50%) but both of these measures stand considerably higher than 2017 (increases of 10 and 14 percentage points respectively). Officers in RaSP were least likely to respond positively across both measures, with only 40% saying they would feel confident seeking help.



% feel confident seeking help	
Aviation	57%
MO19	55%
PaDP	48%
MO3	47%
RaSP	40%

Two-thirds of armed officers believed **they needed more support to do their job** (64%), while nearly four in five said **they were concerned about being supported after an incident** (78%). Results for these questions are more in line with those seen in 2017.

Shift Patterns and Compulsory Overtime

Although most armed officers were happy with their shift pattern, over half felt their home or family life had suffered as a result of work commitments – rising to two-thirds in RaSP – while half also believed compulsory overtime had negatively impacted their wellbeing.

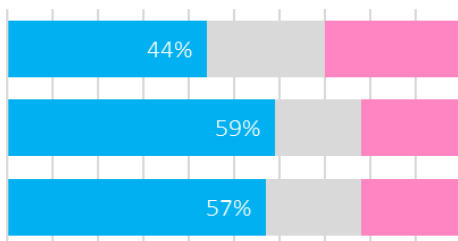
Shift Patterns



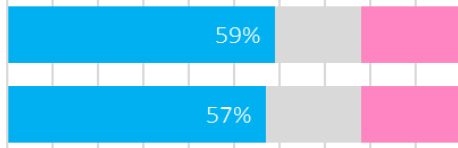
Overall, **82%** of armed officers said they were **happy with their current shift pattern**.

Despite this, a considerable proportion of armed officers felt their work commitments impacted on their home life:

I often have problems with childcare or caring arrangements due to work commitments



I often have to cancel or change my personal plans due to work commitments



My home or family life has suffered as a result of my working hours

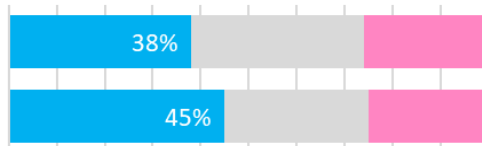


% feel home life has suffered due to work

RaSP	65%
MO19	58%
PaDP	58%
Aviation	47%
MO3	36%

Over half said **their home or family life had suffered as a result of work hours** (57%) with those in RaSP nearly *twice as likely* to say this than those in MO3. No statistically significant gender differences were seen on these measures*.

The flexible working options available in my role are adequate



I would be able to work a flexible pattern if I wanted to

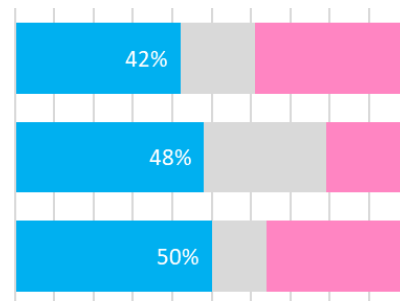


Only 38% of armed officers believed the **flexible working options in their role were adequate**, while less than half believed **they would be able to work a flexible pattern if needed** (45%). Officers in Aviation Policing tended to respond most positively about flexible working, whilst those in MO19 and RaSP were least satisfied. Once again no statistically significant differences were seen by gender here*.

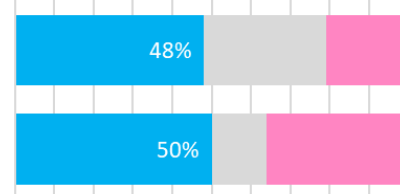
Compulsory Overtime

Armed officers were divided in their views of compulsory overtime. Half **understood the need for it** (50%), but a similar proportion felt **compulsory overtime had a negative impact on their wellbeing** (48%).

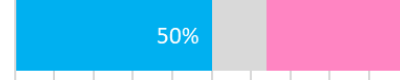
I am happy to work compulsory overtime if needed



Working compulsory overtime has had a negative impact on my wellbeing



I understand the need for firearms officers to work compulsory overtime



■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

Despite two-thirds of RaSP officers feeling their home life had suffered due to work commitments, this group were NOT more likely to say **compulsory overtime had impacted on their wellbeing** (at 38%) – suggesting other work-life balance issues may be at play here. However, 58% of MO19 and 56% of PaDP officers specifically said that compulsory overtime had negatively impacted them.

Nearly all respondents (85%) believed that opportunities to work overtime were an **important source of financial support for armed officers**.



MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

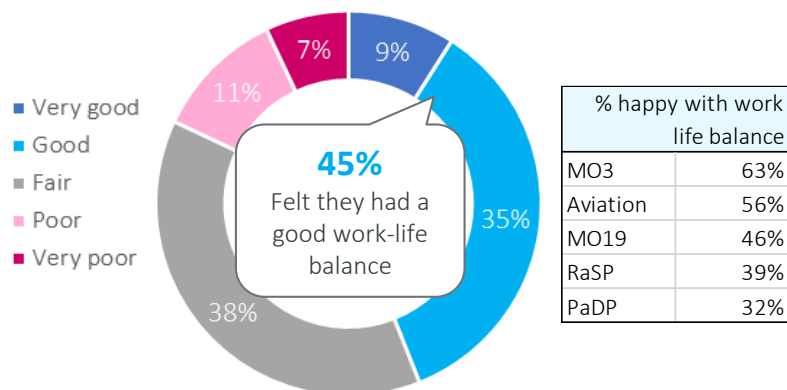
*Please note low base numbers for females (n = c.55) and in MO3 (n = c.55) and Aviation (n = c.78) OCUs.

Work-Life Balance, Officer Retention and Recruitment

Armed officers held mixed views towards their work-life balance, whilst half of female officers felt a lack of flexible working served as a barrier to recruitment. Two-thirds of officers planned to still be in an armed role in three years' time.

Work-Life Balance

Approaching half of armed officers felt they had a **good work-life balance overall** (45%); but one in five rated it as 'poor' (18%).



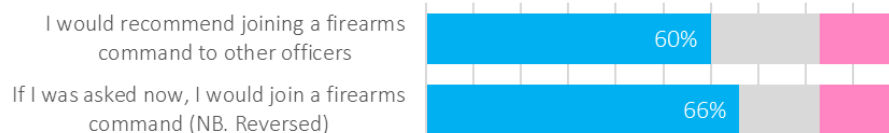
Armed officers in MO3 were most likely to be happy with their work life balance (63%), whilst those in RaSP and PaDP were least likely to be happy (at 39% and 32% respectively). This echoes earlier results whereby RaSP officers were more likely to say they had been negatively affected by work commitments, and PaDP by compulsory overtime.

Barriers to Recruitment

Armed officers were divided as to whether work-life balance issues put people off applying to be a firearms officer. 38% believed **long working hours put people off applying**, with this once again perceived to be a greater barrier amongst RaSP (52%) and PaDP (47%) officers. A third believed **a lack of flexible working opportunities put people off applying** (32%). No differences by command were seen here, but it is notable that female armed officers were *significantly more likely* to feel flexible working was a barrier to recruitment than males (53% vs 31%).

Officer Retention

Around two-thirds of armed officers said they would **recommend joining an armed command to other officers** (60%); an increase of 7 percentage points when compared with 2017, and a marked improvement since 2014 (20%).

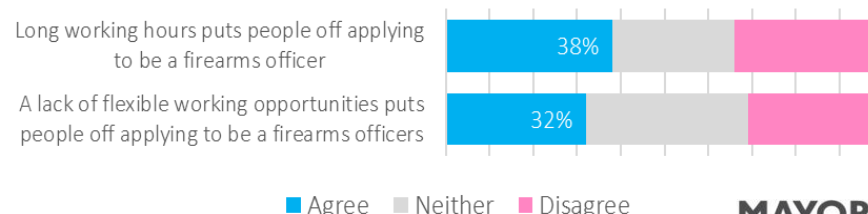


66% said they **intend to be working in an MPS firearms role in three years' time.**



In turn, two-thirds said they **intend to be working in an MPS firearms role three years from now**. This is broadly in line with retention results seen across the MPS in the October 2022 Staff Survey (62%).

However, levels fell to just half amongst those in PaDP (54%), and were also lower for female officers (55%) than males (67%)*. No significant differences were seen here by length of service – with 61% of those in an armed role for less than 5 intending to stay in post, compared with 68% of those in 5-10 years and 67% of those in 10+ years.



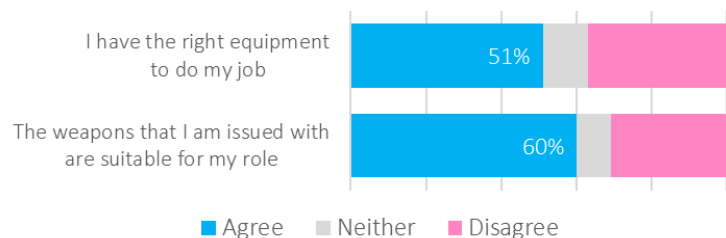
*Please note that this gender difference does not reach statistical significance.

Suitability of Equipment and Officer Safety

Armed officers remained divided about the suitability of their equipment and weapons, but were more supportive of Body Worn Video (BWV) when compared with 2017. However, over one in ten armed officers said they often fear for their safety when on duty.

Equipment and Weapons

Although the proportion of armed officers believing they **have the right equipment to do their job** increased by 6 percentage points compared with 2017, responses remain divided with *only half* of armed officers agreeing (51%).

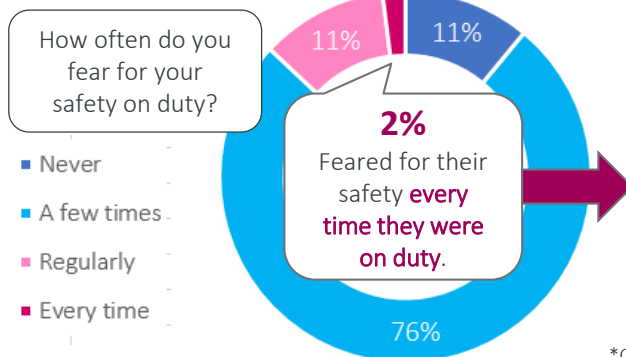


In turn, less than two-thirds believed **their weapons were suitable for their role** (60%), with lowest agreement in RaSP and PaDP. This result is broadly in line with that seen in 2017, where officers specifically raised concerns about the use of pool weapons.

% feel weapons suitable for role	
Aviation	80%
MO3	75%
MO19	63%
PaDP	55%
RaSP	44%

Officer Safety

Whilst most armed officers said they had only **feared for their safety a few times on duty** (76%), over one in ten said they **feared for their safety regularly or every time they were on duty** (13% combined).



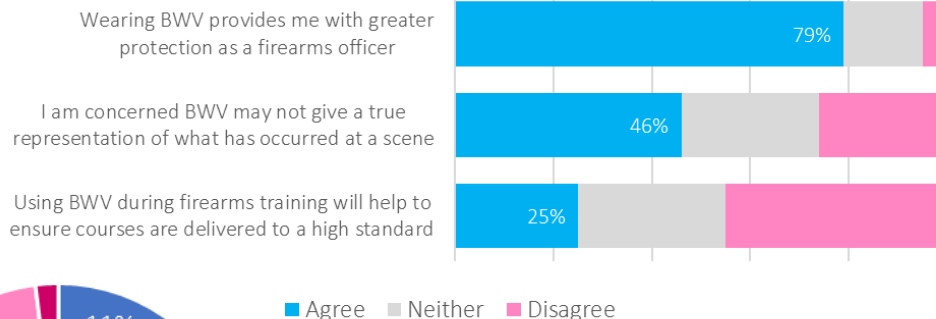
Body Worn Video (BWV)

84% believed **armed officers should wear BWV**.



Results suggest armed officers' attitudes to BWV have become more positive over recent years. The vast majority believed **armed officers should wear BWV**, with this result standing 11 percentage points above 2017. In turn, the proportion **concerned that BWV may not give a true representation of what has occurred at a scene** (46%) was far lower than levels seen in 2017 (71%) and 2014 (89%).

Despite this only a quarter supported the **use of BWV during firearms training** (25%). Few demographic differences were seen here, and support remained low *even amongst those who believed armed officers should wear BWV* (28%).



Having the right **training and equipment** is important in personal safety: officers who felt they did NOT have the right weapons or that their training had NOT prepared them for their role were around *twice as likely* to say they often feared for their safety* (18% vs 10%, and 23% vs 12% respectively).

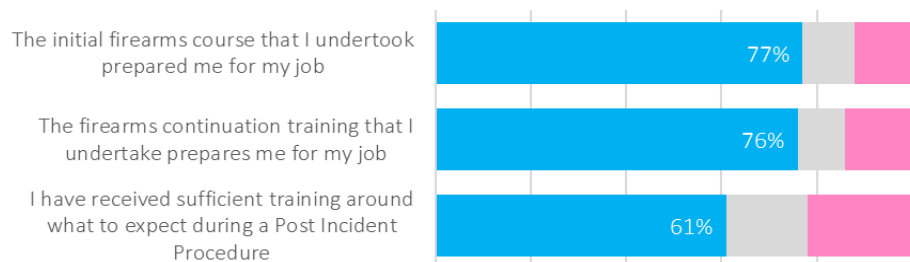
*Combined regularly/every time, compared with those who agreed weapons and training were suitable

Role-based Training and Fitness

Compared with 2017, more armed officers believed their training prepared them for their role; but those in PaDP were less likely to respond positively about their training. Female officers were more likely than males to feel fitness levels were 'too high' and served as a barrier to progression.

Training for Armed Roles

Four in five armed officers believed **their training had prepared them to do their job** (80%) – 10 percentage points above levels seen in 2017. Results suggest this may have been driven by improved perceptions of **continuation training** over this time, with this measure also increasing by 15 percentage points since 2017.



	% feel training prepared them for job
MO3	95%
MO19	91%
Aviation	82%
RaSP	79%
PaDP	56%

■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

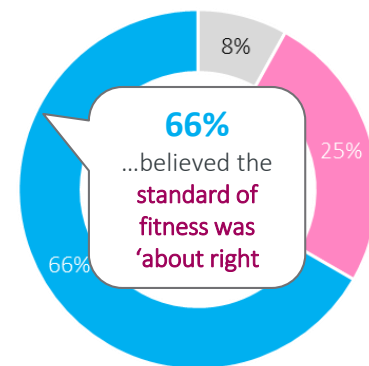
Particularly stark differences were seen here across commands. To illustrate, whilst *nearly all* of MO3 and MO19 felt their training had prepared them, only just over half of PaDP agreed. In turn, only 53% of PaDP responded positively about continuation training.

Approaching two-thirds of armed officers felt **they had received sufficient training about post-incident procedures** (61%); a 10 percentage point increase since 2017. However, this again declined to less than half of PaDP (45%) and RaSP (47%), and was also lower for newer recruits in firearms less than 5 years (54%).

Fitness Levels

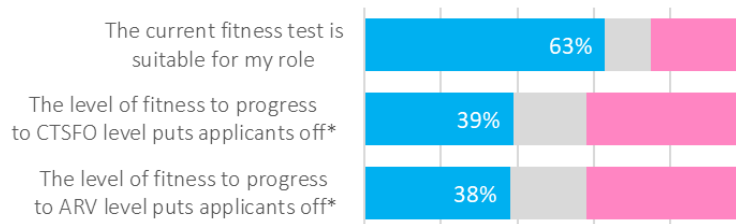
Two-thirds of armed officers believed the **standard of fitness required for their role was 'about right'** – broadly in line with 2017. However, a quarter of officers felt it was 'too low'.

Despite low base numbers, a significant gender divide emerged, with female officers more likely to feel the fitness level required for their role was 'too high'; and male officers more often saying 'too low'.



■ Too high ■ Too low ■ About right

	Male	Female
Too high	7%	19%
Too low	27%	8%
About right	66%	73%



■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

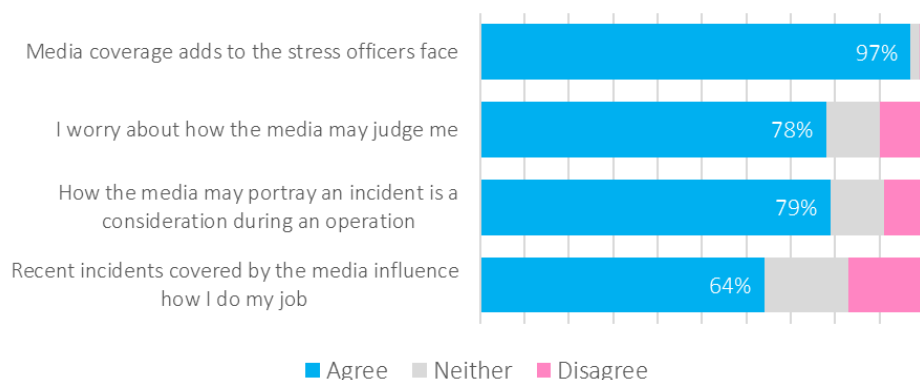
In turn, around two-thirds believed **the fitness test was suitable** (63%), while officers were divided as to whether **fitness standards put applicants off progressing to ARV level** (38%) and **CTSFO level** (39%). Female officers were once again far more likely to feel levels of fitness served as a barrier to progression than males (ARV: 60% vs. 37%; CTSFO: 64% vs. 37%).

Media Coverage

Armed officers' concerns about the media have increased since 2017, with more now feeling it was an operational consideration and affected their job. Many were also concerned about social media and how footage of armed officers was being shared by members of the public.

Media Coverage

Four in five armed officers said they **expected to deal with media scrutiny as part of their job** (80%) – levels in line with 2017. However, findings suggest that officers' concerns about media scrutiny have become more prominent over recent years.



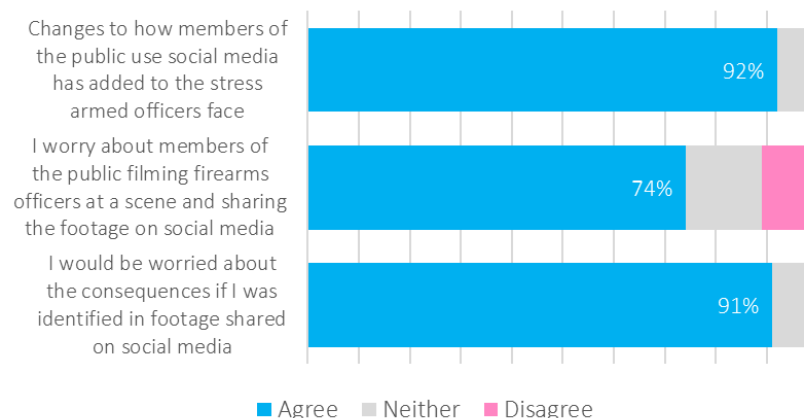
Nearly all now believed **media coverage added to their stress** (97%). This is higher than levels in 2017, but is broadly in line with those seen in 2014 – a pattern that may reflect coverage of the armed response to terrorist incidents in 2017.

Four in five armed officers said they were personally **worried about how the media would judge them** (78%) and that **it was a consideration during an operation** (79%), while two thirds said **recent media coverage influenced their job** (64%). Results for all these questions are around 10 percentage points higher than in 2017, suggesting media considerations may have become more prominent in armed operations.

Media concern was high across armed commands. However, officers who believed they were NOT respected by the public were also *far more likely* to feel media coverage affected how they did their job (71%, vs. 52% of those who felt respected) or to be worried about how the media may judge them (85%, vs. 70%) – suggesting perceptions of media scrutiny and public relations are interlinked.

Social Media

New questions also highlight social media as an emerging area for concern. Nearly all armed officers felt **changes to how the public use social media had also added to their stress** (92%), whilst three-quarters were specifically **worried about members of the public filming armed officers at a scene and sharing it on social media** (74%).



32%

...felt **support from their family and friends to be a firearms officer had recently changed**.



In turn, a third of armed officers believed **family support for their role had recently changed** (32%) - 15 percentage points above levels seen in 2017.

This group were *less likely* to see themselves in an MPS firearms role in three years' time (52%, vs. 73%), suggesting such pressures may be impacting on retention.

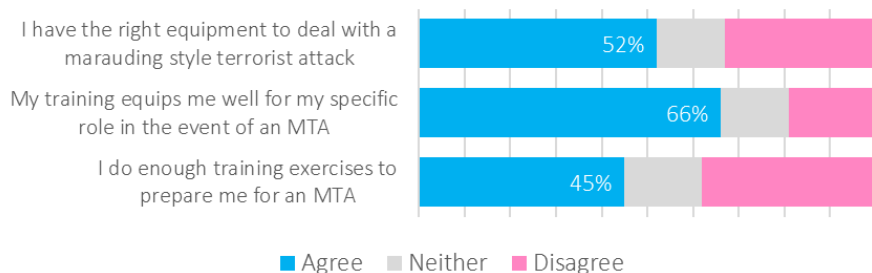
Preparedness to Respond to a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA)

Positive progress has been seen in officers' preparedness to respond to a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) when compared with 2017, but large gaps are seen across armed commands. In addition, fewer armed officers now say they have personally undertaken recent MTA training.

Preparedness for an MTA

Two-thirds of armed officers said they felt **well-briefed about changing terrorist threats** – levels broadly in line with those seen in 2017 (60%).

However, more officers now felt **equipped for their role in an MTA** (+15pp. since 2017), with similar increases also seen in the proportion feeling they **have the right equipment** (+15pp.) and **do enough training** (+20pp.) **to deal with an MTA**. Despite this, only around half of armed officers responded positively here:

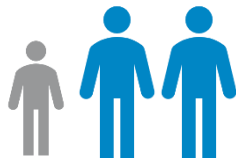


Large gaps were also seen across armed commands, with those in MO19 *most likely* to respond positively about training and equipment for an MTA, and those in PaDP and RaSP *least likely* to respond positively. Armed officers in MO3 were specifically concerned about the equipment available to them.

	% enough training	% right equipment
MO19	70%	69%
MO3	54%	35%
Aviation	49%	64%
PaDP	23%	45%
RaSP	23%	34%

63%

...felt **well-briefed on how terrorist threats have changed over recent years**.

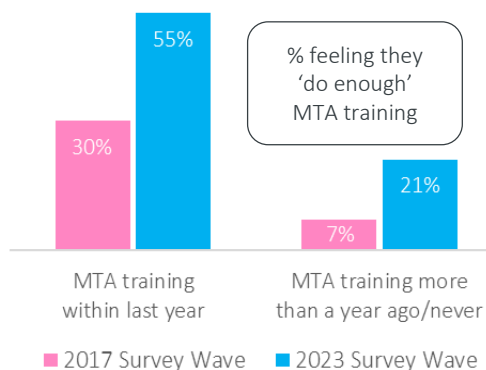


Frequency of MTA Training

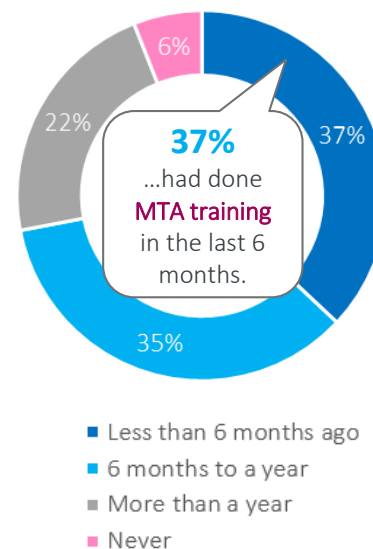
Just over a third of armed officers (37%) said **they had undertaken MTA training in the last six months** – with 72% receiving it **within the last year**.

More recent training was associated with greater confidence in dealing with an MTA: three-quarters of officers completing training within the last year felt **equipped for their role in an MTA** – compared with just half of those who had done it more than a year ago (and a third of those *never* receiving training).

Despite this, the proportion of officers receiving recent MTA training is in fact *lower* than in 2017 (where 80% had done it in the last year). This contrasts earlier improvements seen in officers' perceptions of MTA training (left).



% feeling they 'do enough' MTA training



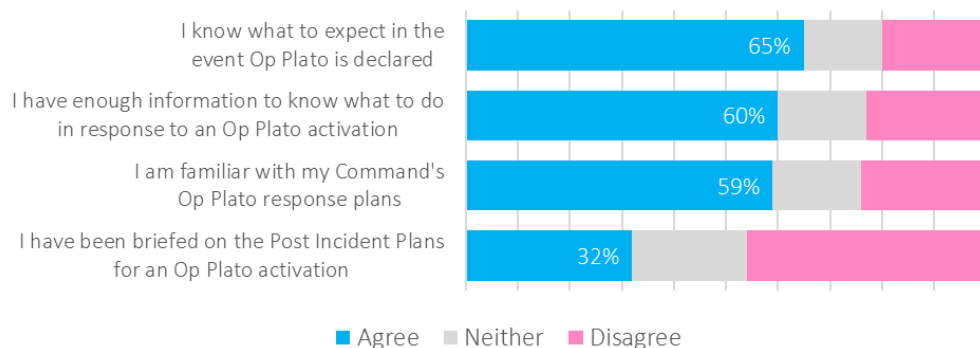
This discrepancy may in part be due to *changing officer expectations around the sufficiency of MTA training*. To illustrate, more now believe they 'do enough' training; even if they haven't personally received any recently.

Operation Plato and Emerging Terrorist Threats

Compared with 2017, more armed officers feel informed about what to do in response to an Operation Plato activation. However, new questions suggest many would not feel confident responding to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) event.

Operation Plato

'Op Plato' is the multi-agency response to a marauding terrorist attack. Overall, two-thirds of armed officers said **they knew what to expect in the event Op Plato is declared** (65%) – slightly above levels in 2017 (61%).



Improvements have been seen this wave in officers' understanding of Op Plato plans, with more saying they **have enough information to know what to do in response to an activation** (+8pp. to 60%) and **feeling familiar with their own Command's Op Plato plans** (+6pp. to 59%). Despite this, only a third of armed officers say they **have been briefed on the Post Incident Plans for an Op Plato activation** (32%).

In line with wider MTA measures, armed officers in MO19 tended to respond most positively; whilst lowest results were seen in RaSP. To illustrate, 90% of armed officers in MO19 said they knew what to expect in the event of Op Plato, compared with just 41% of those in RaSP.



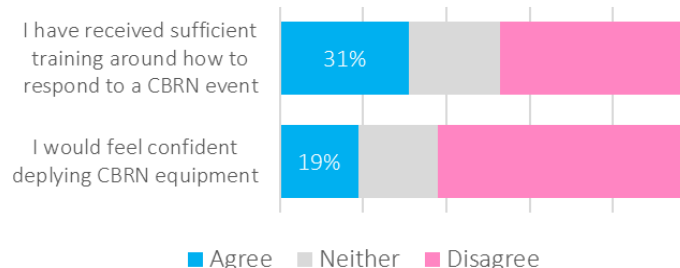
Three-quarters of those who **had received MTA training during the last six months or year** (both 75%) also **knew what to expect in the event Op Plato was declared**; compared with 55% of those receiving training more than a ago (and 16% of those 'never' receiving training).



In line with 2017, few armed officers were confident that **the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) would understand the difficult operating environment during an MTA** (6%).

CBRN Threats

Despite improvements seen in armed officers' confidence dealing with marauding terrorist threats, far fewer felt confident dealing with Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) events.



Only a third of armed officers felt they **had sufficient training to respond to a CBRN event** (31%), whilst just one in five **felt confident deploying CBRN equipment** (19%).

Officers in MO19 were again more likely than other armed commands to feel confident responding to a CBRN event – with half feeling they had received sufficient training (50%) and 28% feeling confident using CBRN equipment.

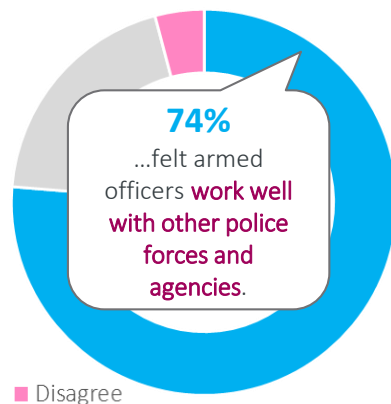
Partnership Working and Multi-Agency Training

Most armed officers felt they worked well with other police forces and partners and recognised the benefits of multi-agency training. Officers were divided as to whether they felt they did enough multi-agency training – with PaDP least positive about partnership working.

Partnership Working

New questions were asked this wave to explore armed officers' attitudes and experiences of partnership working.

Overall, three-quarters believed **armed officers in the Metropolitan Police Service work well with other police forces and emergency service partners** (74%).



■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree

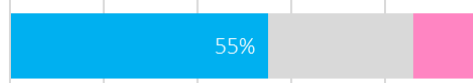
I feel confident working collaboratively with other police forces and agencies



My training has equipped me to be able to work effectively with other police forces and agencies



The MPS has the right policies and procedures in place to enable firearms officers to work collaboratively with other forces and agencies



In turn, three-quarters said they were personally **confident working collaboratively with other police forces and agencies** (74%). However, fewer believed **their training had been sufficient to equip them to work effectively with partners** (66%) or that **the Metropolitan Police Service had the right policies and procedures in place to support partnership working** (55%).

Officers in PaDP were *less likely* than those in other armed commands to respond positively about partnership working. Here, just 42% believed their training had equipped them to work collaboratively, while only one in three believed the MPS had the right policies in place to support partnership working (32%).

Multi-Agency Training Exercises

Many armed officers believed that multi-agency training exercises brought benefits, including **improved relationships across partners** (81%) and **increased confidence responding to incidents** (71%).

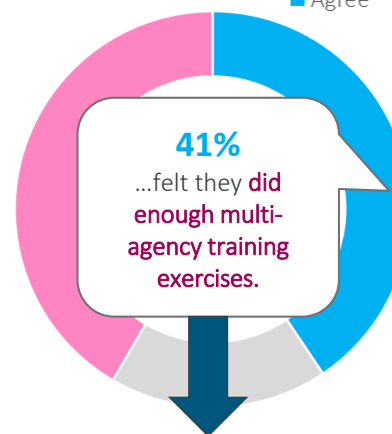
Multi-agency training exercises help to build relationships across partner responders



Multi-agency training exercises make me feel more confident in responding to a major incident or terrorist threat



■ Agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree



Despite this, just 41% agreed that **their role provided enough opportunities for multi-agency training**; whilst a similar proportion *actively disagreed* (42%).

Once again, levels were lowest in PaDP, where just 15% felt there were enough opportunities for them.

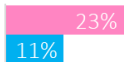
Nearly all of this group said they **know what to expect in response to an Op Plato activation** (85%), compared with just half of those who felt they did NOT do enough exercises (53%).

Thematic Reflection: Scrutiny and Accountability

Many questions that have seen declines since 2017 are those relating to officers' perceptions of wider scrutiny and accountability in their role. This slide collates views on this topic to show change over time – revealing heightened concerns amongst armed officers that span many areas.

Wider Support

I feel supported by the Metropolitan Police Service



-12pp.

My work is supported by the Government



u/a.

My work is supported by the Mayor of London and his Office



u/a.

N.B.
Questions not
asked in 2017

Media Scrutiny

I expect to have to deal with media scrutiny as part of my job



-1pp.

Recent incidents covered by the media influence how I do my job



+11pp.

I worry about how the media may judge me



+12pp.

How the media may portray an incident is a consideration



+9pp.

Public Accountability

I feel respected by the public



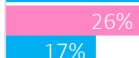
-30pp.

How the firearms command responds to incidents makes the public feel safer



-9pp.

The public have confidence in how the MPS deals with Post-Incident events



-9pp.

Post-Incident Accountability

I have received sufficient training around what to expect post-incident



+10pp.

I have been briefed on the Post-Incident Plans for an Op Plato activation



+4pp.

Being supported after an incident is a real concern for me



-5pp.

Scrutiny and Accountability: Changes since 2017

When compared with the previous wave in 2017, it is notable that *large shifts* have been seen on many questions about scrutiny and accountability of armed policing.

Officers' perceptions of **wider support for their role** were *particularly poor* this wave. Fewer felt supported by the Metropolitan Police Service as an organisation, whilst new questions showed only a small minority felt their work was supported by the Government or by the Mayor of London and his Office.

In turn, more armed officers now felt concerned about **media scrutiny** in their job. The proportion of officers feeling respected by **the public** *more than halved* since 2017*, whilst officers were also less confident that Londoners felt reassured by their work or by the processes in place to ensure post-incident accountability.

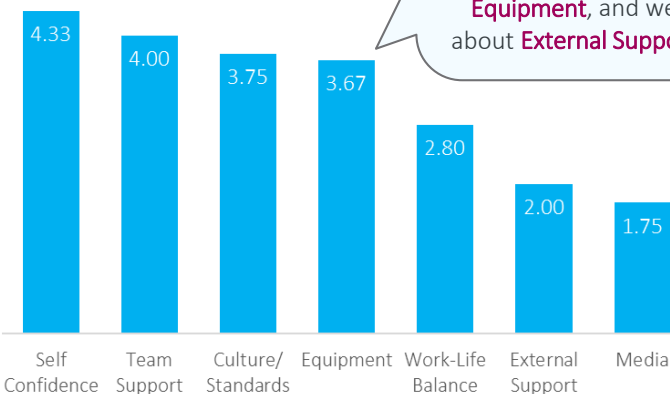
Despite more armed officers now feeling familiar with **post-incident procedures**, *over three-quarters* were also still concerned about the support available to them here.

Areas of Opportunity and Levers to Change in Armed Policing

Looking across the survey as a whole, armed officers were most positive about their own abilities and immediate team; but were least positive about external support and the media. Some armed commands saw unique areas of risk and opportunity, whilst improvements to different aspects of the work environment are likely to act as levers to change for wider behaviours such as officer retention, safety on duty and job pride.

Areas of Opportunity

Survey questions were grouped into thematic areas and scored so that 1 = most negative views and 5 = most positive views. See appendix for further details.



Looking across the core survey questions as a whole, officers scored highest for their own **Self-Confidence** and immediate **Team Support**, but were more mixed about **Culture** and **Equipment**, and were least positive about **External Support** and the **Media**.

This ordering was consistent across **armed commands**; but some commands saw specific areas of opportunity.

Whilst **PaDP** officers held negative views that spanned across several work areas, other armed commands saw more specific risks - including Culture/Standards and Equipment in **RaSP**, and External Support in **MO19**:

Table summarises median scores across the seven thematic areas in each armed OCU, highlighting results that stand above (blue) or below (purple) the overall MPS armed level.

	Aviation	MO3	PaDP	RaSP	MO19
Self Confidence	4.67	4.67	4.33	4.33	4.33
Team Support	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Culture/Standards	3.75	4.00	3.50	3.50	3.75
Equipment	4.00	4.00	3.33	3.00	3.67
Work-Life Balance	3.20	3.20	2.60	2.80	2.80
External Support	2.00	2.25	1.75	2.00	1.75
Media	2.00	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75

Levers to Change

In turn, different areas of the work environment were important in shaping wider armed attitudes and behaviours – revealing **key levers to change**:

*Diagrams show statistically significant predictors; thicker lines illustrate stronger relationships. See appendix for further details.

Increasing **organisational, governmental and Mayoral backing** for armed officers will serve as a lever to improve their pride in their role...

External Support
Team Support
Self Confidence

What makes an armed officer feel PROUD of their role?

What makes an armed officer want to LEAVE their role within three years?

Work-Life Balance
Team Support
External Support

...whilst a better **work-Life balance** seems key to officer retention.

Reducing officers' **media concerns** – and improving suitability of **equipment** – will help to boost safety on duty.

Media
Equipment
Work-Life Balance
OCU (MO19/MO3)

What makes an armed officer regularly FEAR FOR THEIR SAFETY?

Appendix: Methodological Notes and Analytical Approach

Methodology - Identifying the Thematic Areas

Reflecting back across the survey as a whole, Factor Analysis was performed to look at patterns in the data to reduce armed officers' views across the 'core' questions asked into a smaller set of thematic areas*. This revealed seven distinct areas affecting armed policing captured in the survey, which are illustrated on the right. Note that questions *specific to tactics or processes* – including MTAs – were not included in this analysis.

Methodology – Creating Scores

For each loading question, responses were scored so that 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Negatively worded questions (e.g. I worry about how the media may judge me) were reverse coded. An average was then taken for each officer across questions for each theme, so that:

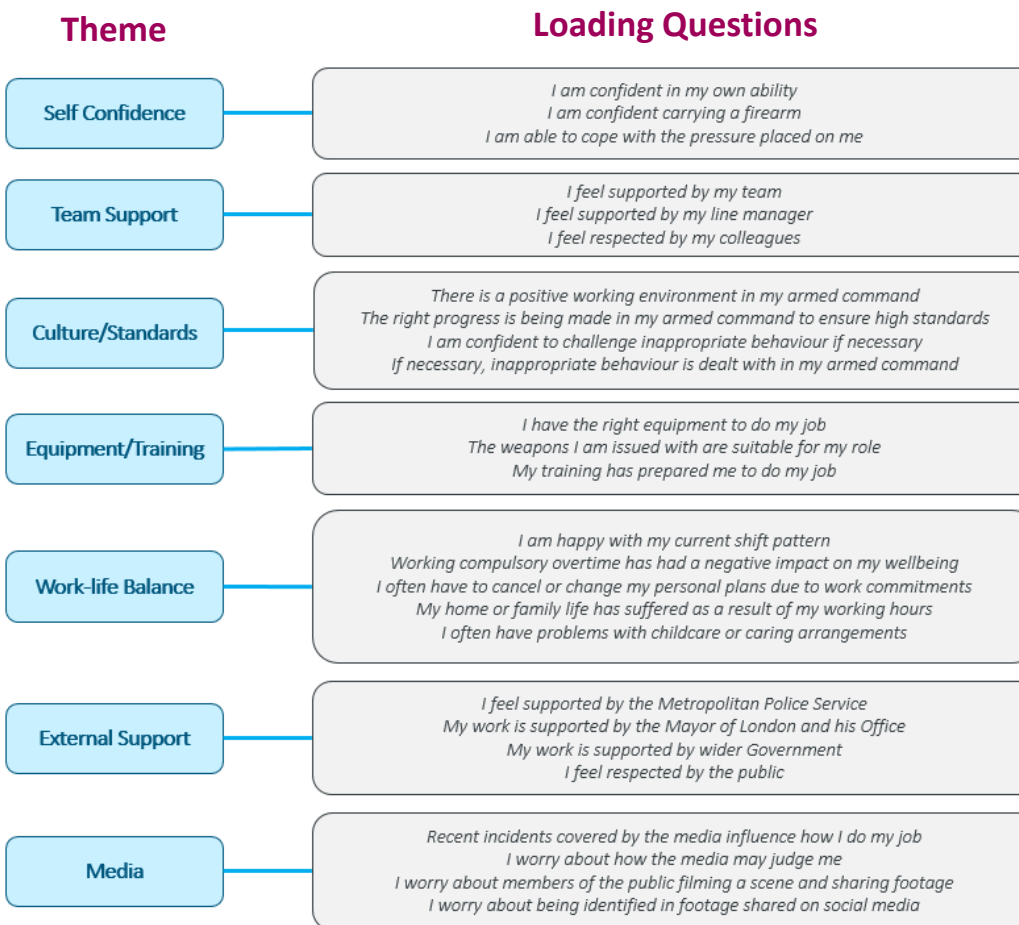
1 = Most Negative Views on the Thematic Area

5 = Most Positive Views on the Thematic Area

Overall scale scores refer to the median result for all armed officers on the seven thematic areas.

Methodology – Modelling Levers to Change

Levers to change are drawn from three logistic regression models. **Model 1** predicted whether an officer agreed that they 'are proud to be a firearms officer'; **Model 2** predicted whether an officer disagreed that they 'intend to be working in an MPS armed command in three years time' and **Model 3** predicted whether an officer 'always/regularly feared for their safety'. All regression models included officers' scores on the seven factor scales and additionally controlled for their OCU and gender. Only statistically significant scale predictors are visually illustrated, with thicker lines indicating the strongest predictive relationship(s). Final models accounted for c.31% of variance in pride, c.15% of variance in the decision to leave, and c.13% of safety.



*Results are drawn from Principal Components Analysis with Varimax rotation on key questions in the Firearms Survey. Questions were selected for inclusion in the analysis if they were judged to reflect an officers' own experiences (as opposed to a hypothetical judgement or one about someone else, such as the public or the media), and were not specific to tactics or processes (e.g. terrorist attacks/post-incident/multi-agency exercises). Two items were initially included in the analysis but subsequently removed due to poor loading ('I feel confident seeking help' and 'I expect to deal with media scrutiny'). All resultant scales had Cronbach's Alpha of >0.7 with the exception of Equipment/Training (0.66).