



# Bermuda Police Service

## A Cultural Review



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## Executive summary

The Bermuda Police Service (BPS) is a high performing, forward thinking and advanced force in comparison to its Overseas Territories counterparts. A few recent events, both local and international have had an impact on the Service. Policing internationally is still recovering from Covid and the impact that this has had on the workforce is still felt, through burnt out, mental health issues in society and within. Policing behaviour internationally has also had an impact on the police and how they are perceived, the murder of George Floyd and Sarah Everard being cases in point. Locally the BPS has been impacted by the sudden departure of former Commissioner Stephen Corbishley, following allegations of gross misconduct. All the above have compounded into low morale across the organisation and a less than positive culture. The workforce still has strong shared values and take pride in their work and the BPS. As a result, a cultural review was commissioned by the Governor and the Commissioner, to better understand what the current state assessment is and deliver practical recommendations which the BPS can adopt to the move the organisation forward.

This paper summarises the objective of the review, the findings and recommendations. This includes the results from the force-wide survey conducted to capture as much feedback as possible.

## Objective

The objective of the cultural review, as per the Terms of Reference, was to carry out a current state assessment of the Bermuda Police Service (BPS) to assist them in understanding what their current culture is and what more can be done to improve it.

More specifically it entailed the following;

- Survey the entire workforce to assess the current culture of the BPS
- Understand the aspirations of the Senior Leadership team with regards to a positive culture, identifying current strengths and areas for improvement
- Comment upon the existing programme of work undertaken and/or initiatives in place to ensure positive workplace cultures
- Provide an opportunity for current staff, with a particular focus on protected characteristics, to share their experiences of working in the Service individually and/or in focus groups
- Review the extent or otherwise of different experiences of staff with protected characteristics arising from these key procedures and their practices, identifying good practice as well as barriers



- Consider the impact of existing behaviours
- Independently assess the effectiveness of current procedures and practices relevant to workplace culture, training provision and understanding organisational learning adopted
- Review all the information gathered and make recommendations that can be adopted by the force to align culture to strategy

## Background and context

Over the last 4 years policing has come under increased scrutiny and public perception, trust and confidence towards policing has changed. Although Bermuda has maintained a relatively high level of public satisfaction, in the workforce morale is low.

Understanding of the current challenges will help to explain why.

The current challenges facing the BPS are as follows;

### **Capacity**

Resourcing is by far the biggest challenge. The BPS has 360 officers at the time of writing with little to no surge capacity, based on a budgeted headcount of 400. The reasons for this stem from a multitude of reasons; there is a perception that people feel burnt out, there are difficulties recruiting the right calibre of applicants both locally and overseas as well as retaining them, suitability of officers joining in the first instance, a natural cycle of a large cohort of officers coming up to retirement and there is a generational shift – with policing no longer seen as a career for life, with officers joining and staying for shorter periods of time.

### **Capability**

There are challenges around capability. There is a gulf between the officers who have 25 plus years' service and those with 10 or less. The frontline is young in both service and experience and in most cases are being supervised by those who are also young in service. Due to shortages in officer numbers, you have officers dealing with greater demand and more complex demand with fewer numbers. There are also challenges around training offerings, availability and maintaining specialisms.

### **Changing picture of crime**

There is an increase in serious crime as well as the complexity of crime. There has been an increase in gun and gang crime on the island, both of which are often linked to drugs. Domestic abuse (DA) is also a focus area for the Service with an anecdotal rise in the level of violence. There is a gap in understanding true levels of DA in the Country and



further emphasis on improved reporting, recording, and training has let this become a bigger driver of demand for the force.

### **Professional Standards**

The BPS has been on a journey to embed Professional Standards since 2018, which was formalised by former Deputy Commissioner Wright and prioritized by former Corbishley as best practice. Although being a leading force among overseas territories, implementation and the embedding of PSD has been challenging. The benefits of having improper conduct challenged is a positive for the service. However, there is the sentiment that the policy is being over-used and being applied to matters that should instead be dealt with as performance. This has led to a culture of fear.

### **Findings from field work and staff engagement**

The BPS facilitated a week of field work to help to get a better understanding of the current culture of the organisation. General observations from field work have been elaborated below.

The challenges facing the organisation mentioned above were corroborated by most of the individuals that were met with.

Around capacity and capability, the shortage of officer/staff numbers is having a profound impact on managing demand, increased pressure and adding to the 'burn out' mentioned above. There is a large swathe of the organisation that have already retired or are close to retiring. The current policy probably doesn't make the best use of the collective experience of these individuals, who feel they are unable to add value to the organisation. On the other hand, there are some in the organisation who feel retaining officers/staff post-retirement stifles opportunities for those looking for progression. With 80 officers on the post-retirement scheme (22% of the workforce) this is an area of risk for the Service to consider. Linked to this is the lack of succession planning, which is an inherent problem in policing in general.

Training was a contentious issue for some. There is a perception that training is the privilege of a few and is concentrated to those most senior in the organisation, particularly when it comes to overseas training. There was also a sense of officers getting training and support staff not getting any or very few training opportunities.

PSD in its current form has led to a culture of fear and distrust in the organisation. Interviewees reported a lack of consistency in following policies, the use of PSD as a threat, untenable timescales for investigations and often conflicts of interest in investigations. Some more high-profile cases have also had media involvement,



compounding that sense of fear further. Often people that we spoke with suggested that trust had been broken.

The discussions around legal (liability) protection dominated several conversations. For those in the organisation that were responsible for high-risk jobs. Taking into consideration the changing nature of crimes on the island and previous experiences of officers, this is an area of concern for the workforce. This then has an impact on culture in particular feelings of vulnerability. There have been several opportunities to communicate updates on this matter by the Senior Leadership Team and the BPA, however this continues to be a source of tension and remains unresolved.

Promotion processes have recently changed in the BPS, under the premise to make them fairer and use a wide range of views to identify candidates eligible for promotion. The consensus is that this process is not clearly understood with a lack of detailed information around the policy. Without this information available it is difficult for the workforce to see the merits of the new way, which were clearly explained.

The Service is moving forwards in terms empowering women in the organisation. Only in the last 12-18 months has this gained traction and the women in the organisation feel supported as they continue to set up a Women's network. Although there is an understanding that more needs to be done in this space, the direction of travel is positive.

## Culture and sub-cultures

The current BPS culture is made up of many sub-cultures, all of which contribute to the way in which the organisation 'feels' today. The sub-cultures are often in contention with one another and are multi-layered in different parts of the organisation.

**Multi-generational:** Like other forces internationally, the workplace is now a compilation of Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z individuals. All three generations have different sets of values, different communication styles, expectations and views about their career. Understanding this and taking it into consideration when communicating with the force will be essential in developing a more cohesive culture.

**Recognising the challenges of a multi-ethnic workforce:** The BPS, although predominately Black Bermudian is comprised of other races and ethnicities – White Bermudian/ White Other, Caribbean, British and Other. The interracial and multi-ethnic makeup of the organisation is seen as a strength for the BPS. There is a sense of pride in being able to draw on varied cultures and experiences when it comes to policing. However, there are also challenges that this presents and in turn creates a complex working environment, with differing ethnic groups feeling differentiation in how they are treated and therefore how they fit into the wider organisation. For example, there were



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narratives shared that highlighted the following; Caribbean officers expressed feeling disadvantaged because of a perceived lack of experience compared to their counterparts; a perception from Bermudian officers that they are disadvantage in terms of career progression and opportunities; white officers feeling as they are treated differently; and the perception that race and nationality play a large role in the organisations current culture.

**Gender:** Female officers are a minority, in particular female officers in senior leadership posts and specialist units. There is a positive shift with regards to providing women opportunities in the organisation and this is supported by the Chief Officer team well.

**Senior Leaders:** There is a sense of a 'them and us' culture between the wider workforce and senior leadership team. The wider workforce feels that there is differential treatment according to rank, the leaders of the organisation are less visible and less present.

### Positive feedback

During the fieldwork, the first question asked to all participants was to state what they felt the positive elements were of working at the BPS. The following areas were highlighted.

Overall, all the people we engaged with had a deep sense of pride, belonging to and being a part of the Bermuda Police Service. They were deeply proud of their roles, the public they served, and their contribution to keeping Bermuda safe. In addition, officers and staff felt they had a good relationship with the community. Neighbourhood policing was a strength for the force and relationships with the community were strong. In relation to this, officers feel like they still command respect from the public.

Another strength that was articulated by those engaged in the fieldwork was the diversity of the force. The multicultural and multi-ethnic makeup of the force was highlighted as a positive, due to the diversity of thought and experience this brings to the service. As well as being able to leverage best practice from varied personal experiences.

Tenacity and resilience were the final most quoted positive traits of the organisation. Despite the shortages in resourcing and high demand felt by the organisation, the workforce expressed their ability to get the job done and remain resilient during difficult times.



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### Areas for improvement

The following areas have been identified as areas for improvement, which if addressed should assist in driving forward a more positive culture for the organisation.

#### **Address the resourcing shortages**

The Service is recruiting more broadly and through different avenues and pools of candidates than before. However, the BPS can go further.

- Recruitment and retention: ensuring robust recruitment and retention process will allow for the right people to join the organisation, intervene early for those thinking of leaving and create pathways for rising stars who see a long-term career in policing (both local and overseas officers)
- The Retirees' policy should be reviewed to ensure that the organisation is not left open to risk and that experience is utilised most effectively
- Police staff roles: There are functions in the organisation that are being done by officers with warranted powers, that could also be done by police staff. The pool of people which you can recruit from, particularly given the declining hospitality sector and growing reinsurance sector there will be skills that can be transferable
- The adoption of civilian investigators is a method by which many UK forces have addressed detective shortages. A similar model can be adopted in Bermuda

#### **Support for the workforce**

- Greater wellbeing and mental health support in a post-covid work environment should be a priority as it is linked to better employee satisfaction, performance and productivity
- Wellbeing is seen to be an issue in the organisation and burn out and stress are significant pressures
- The OHU and HR teams are not sufficiently resourced to meet the needs and demands of the organisation
- Recognition of the value that both officers and staff add to the organisation. With senior police staff members being afforded the same voice as senior officers
- Review shift patterns according to demand and organisational needs as well as consideration for things such as the fatigue index

#### **Mentoring and coaching**

- Mentoring and coaching are key tools used to retain a workforce and successfully manage succession planning





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- Reverse mentoring can assist in a greater level of understanding between different roles and functions, different ranks, different generations and different ethnicities
- Successful identification and nurturing of talent helps to future proof the organisation

#### **Improvements to existing PSD process**

- The current process and policies need to be reviewed, to prevent the lack of a consistent approach being applied
- Conflicts of interest need to be managed better or outsourced
- The organisation needs to educate the workforce on what qualifies as a PSD issue and what would fall under the remit of performance management
- Timely resolution will lead to greater clarity and trust in the process as well as more efficient outcomes for all those involved
- Ensure that there sufficient training for those undertaking PSD matters and investigations.

#### **Improve communications**

- A perennial issue for policing is good internal communication and most people that were engaged with felt that communication in the BPS would be a key tool to help improve the culture
- Good communication which is accessible to all in the organisation is imperative to share key messages through different mediums
- Listening to lower ranks and experts in their fields is an area for improvement in the service

#### **Fairness and transparency**

- Ensure that there is a fair and transparent process for the following, ensure the process is audited and that leaders are held accountable.
  - Recruitment
  - Promotions
  - Training allocation
  - Progression
  - PSD matters and inquiries
  - Bullying and harassment
- If policies and procedures are adhered to then statements/accusations of discrimination, nepotism, favouritism will be addressed
- Feedback is also critical in explaining why certain decisions are taken and the rationale behind it



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## **Leadership**

- There are perceptions that remnants from the previous Corbishley administration are still present. The breakdown of trust from that point in time needs to be rebuilt
- There are criticisms that the current leadership team are not visible to all parts of the organisation.
- Although there is recognition of more opportunities to speak with the Commissioner directly, this should not lead to the erosion of the chain of command
- There is a perception of cliques and camps within the senior leadership team and aligned to that there is favouritism at play when it comes to promotions, allocation of training, resources etc. This cannot be addressed unless there are documented policies and strategies to demonstrate that this is not the case
- The leadership team need to do more to empower senior and middle managers
- Management structures and force alignment should be assessed for any conflicts of interest

## Recommendations

1. Review all people and workforce policies to ensure that they are still fit for purpose and are aligned to current processes. Where there is no written policy, one should be written and shared. Policies to focus on include;
  - Recruitment
  - Promotions
  - Training allocation
  - Progression
  - PSD matters and inquiries
  - Bullying and harassment
2. Further establish the BPS Women's network and build a roadmap with clearly defined measures of success and use that group to drive change in the organisation that enables the BPS to attract, retain and promote women across the organisation in all grades and ranks, for both officers and staff.
3. Revise the BPS Strategic and Operational Plan
  - Including a revised set of values, vision and ambitions in line with what the organisation wants to improve and move forward with
4. Adopt the new [College of Policing Code of Ethics](#) in line with a revised strategy
5. Invest in a Strategy, Policy and Governance team
  - To ensure that a new/revised strategy is well embedded, understood and progress tracked
  - Review and maintain policies for the organisation
  - Audit existing policies and procedures
  - Improve organisational learning
6. Invest in your business functions that allow you to better understand the workforce and meet their needs – HR, OHU, Wellbeing
  - Adopt the Oscar Kilo blue light framework developing a wellbeing programme

When the recommendations have been reviewed and agreed to, Hertfordshire Constabulary will assist in creating a delivery plan to land the various actions above.



## Survey analysis and results

The survey shared with the organisation at the end of the fieldwork was designed to ascertain the level of shared values and positive culture. The questions cover six themes including: Belonging, Courage, Respect, Service Together, Voice. There were 196 responses to the force wide survey (46% of the workforce).

Overall, 52.06% the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree that there is a positive culture in the organisation, with 29.9% of respondents neither agree nor disagree.

Going through each theme in turn, 'Belonging' scored well with the majority of respondents who agreed with the statements. Except for the statement 'I am valued', whereby more respondents disagreed than agreed.

For 'Courage', there is a positive that more people feel safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour or practice. However, there are more respondents who feel that the culture does not enable change and improvement at all levels.

For 'Respect', the standout result of the whole survey comes from the statement around I see fairness for everyone, where 72.82% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This is validated by the conversations had during the field work. Similarly, 62.05% do not see respect for everyone.

There were more positive outcomes from the questions around 'Service', with regards to understanding their role, ability to reach their potential and offering the best service, with an average of 57.78% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

'Together' also saw more positives statements, around feeling part of the team, resilience and working well together. The team works well together scored 71.8% for agree and strongly agree. This was also apparent in the fieldwork, where people were proud of their teams and the work they do.

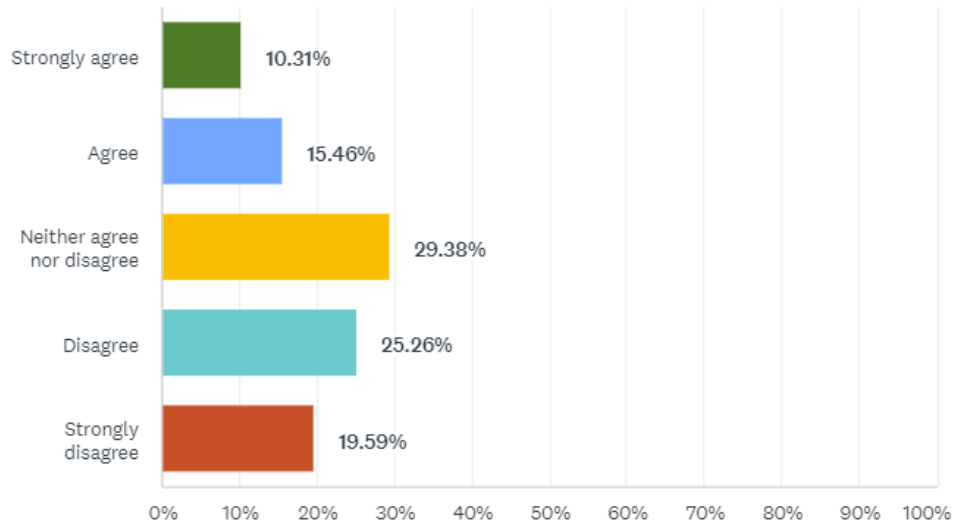
The statements around Voice were mixed. The majority of respondents who felt they could express their views and suggestions was 53.37%. However, there were more that disagreed than agreed around having their needs understood. Although not as stark more respondents felt that their voice didn't matter.

By and large, the organisation understands their shared values well but do not feel that there is a positive culture.



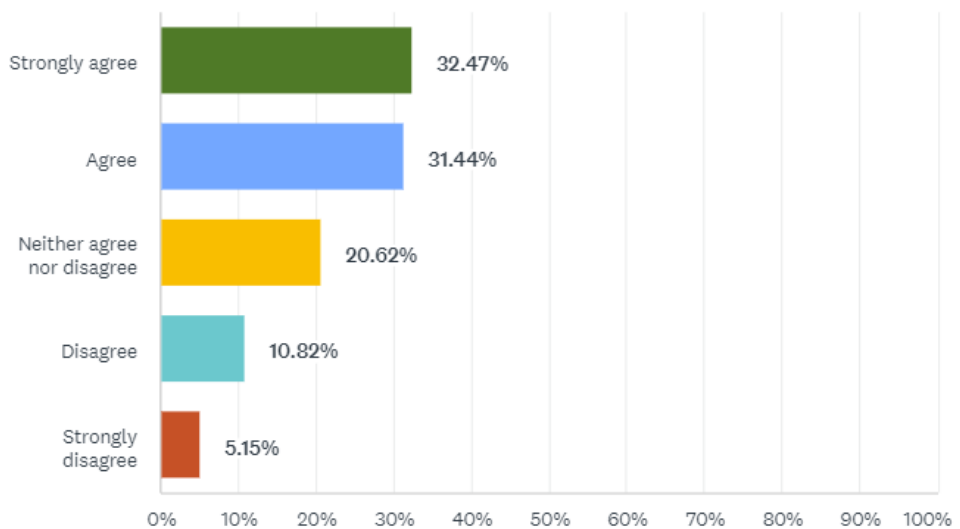
## Belonging: I am valued here

Answered: 194 Skipped: 2



## Belonging: I belong here

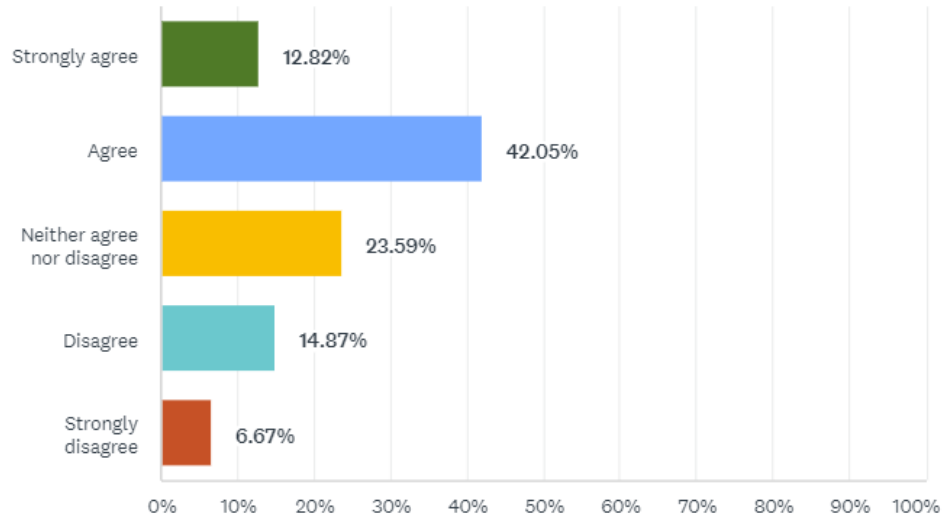
Answered: 194 Skipped: 2





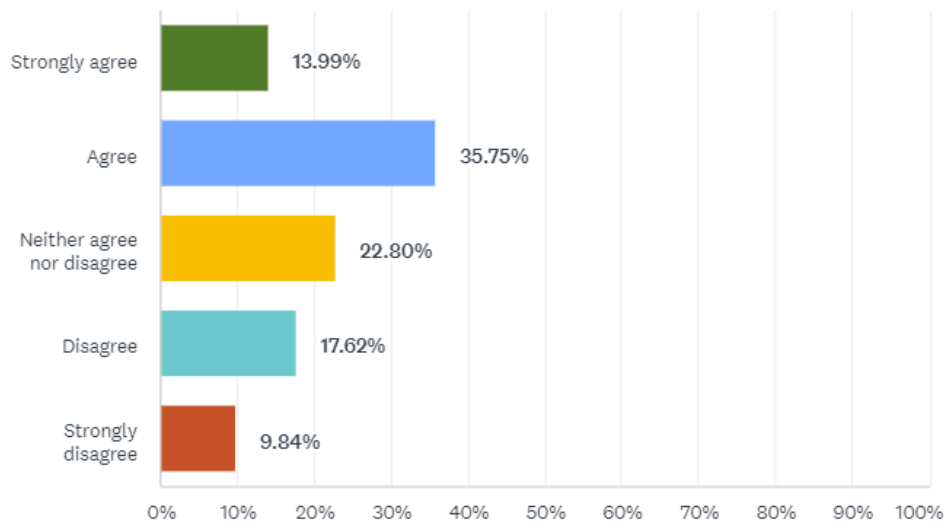
### Belonging: I am happy here

Answered: 195 Skipped: 1



### Belonging: I can see myself working in this culture long term

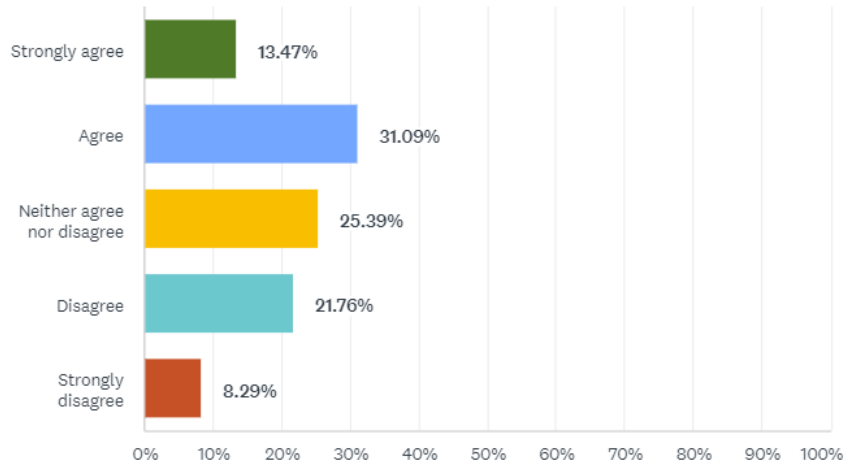
Answered: 193 Skipped: 3





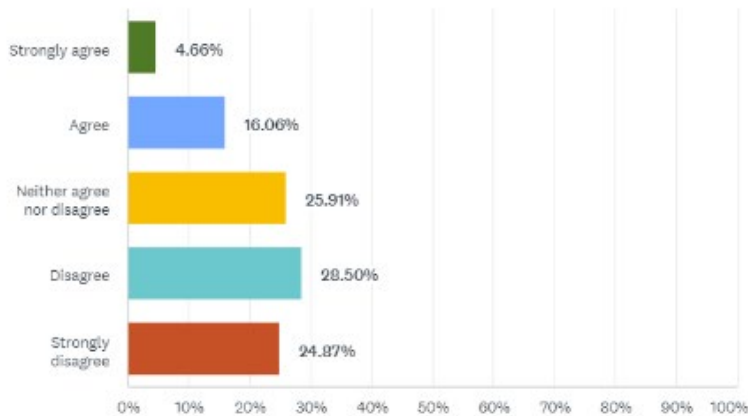
### Courage: I am supported to act on my own initiative

Answered: 193 Skipped: 3



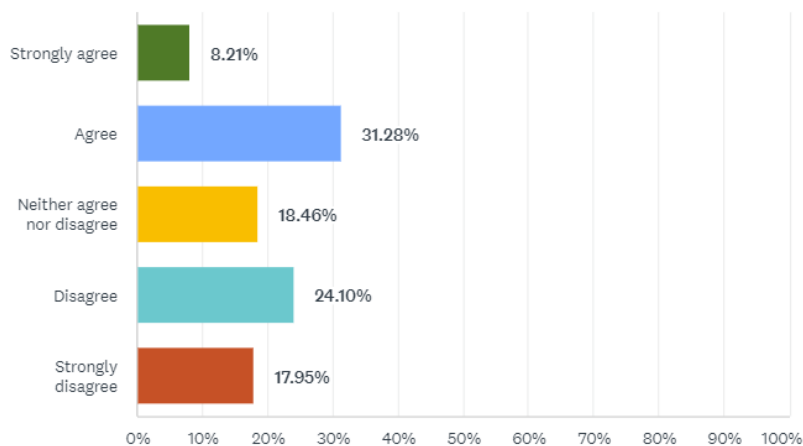
### Courage: I am in a culture that enables change and improvement at all levels

Answered: 193 Skipped: 3



### Courage: I am safe to challenge inappropriate behaviour or practice

Answered: 195 Skipped: 1

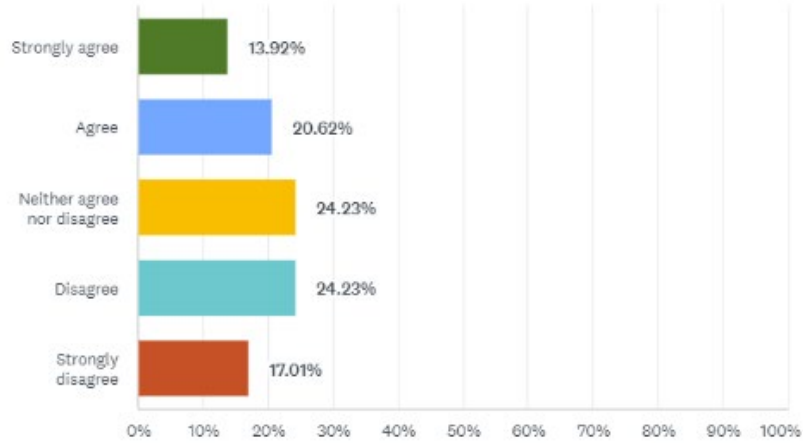




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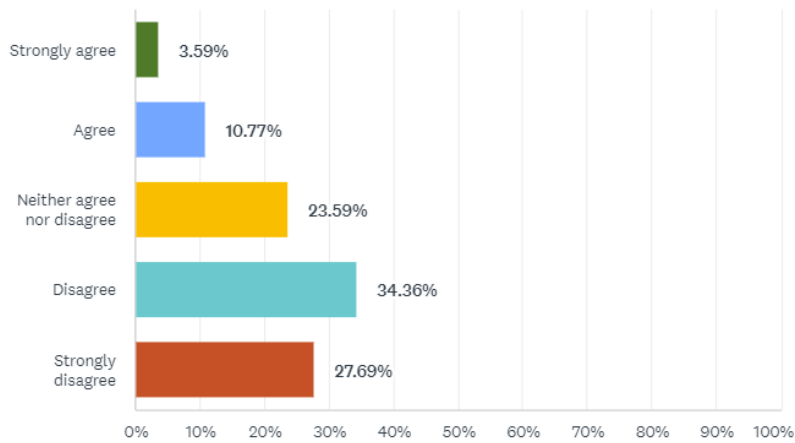
## Respect: My wellbeing matters

Answered: 194 Skipped: 2



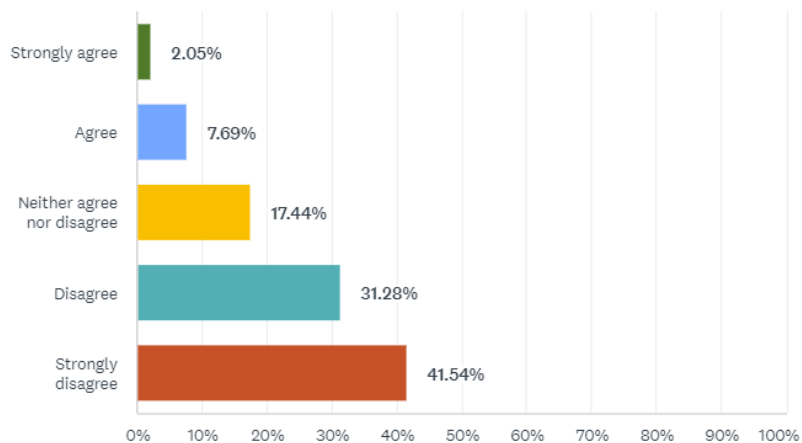
## Respect: I see respect for everyone

Answered: 195 Skipped: 1



## Respect: I see fairness for everyone

Answered: 195 Skipped: 1

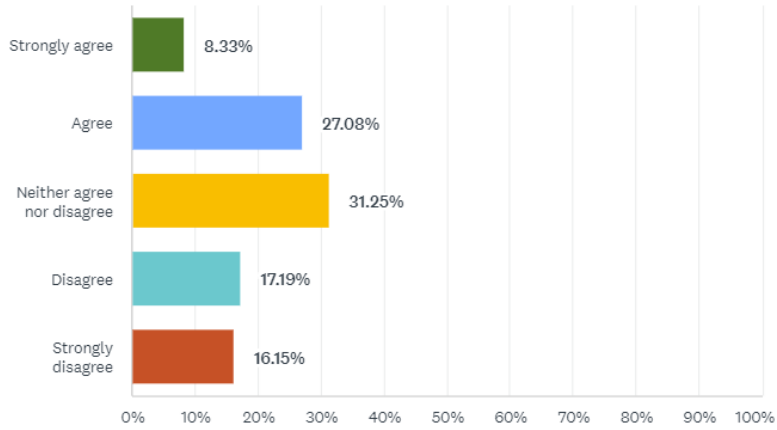






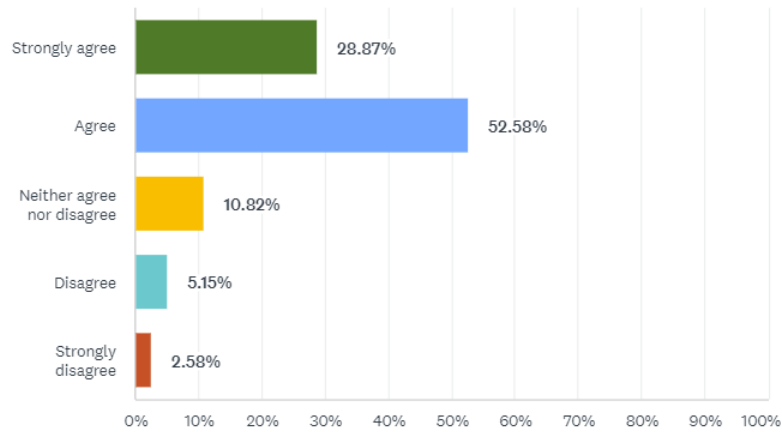
### Service: I can reach my potential here

Answered: 192 Skipped: 4



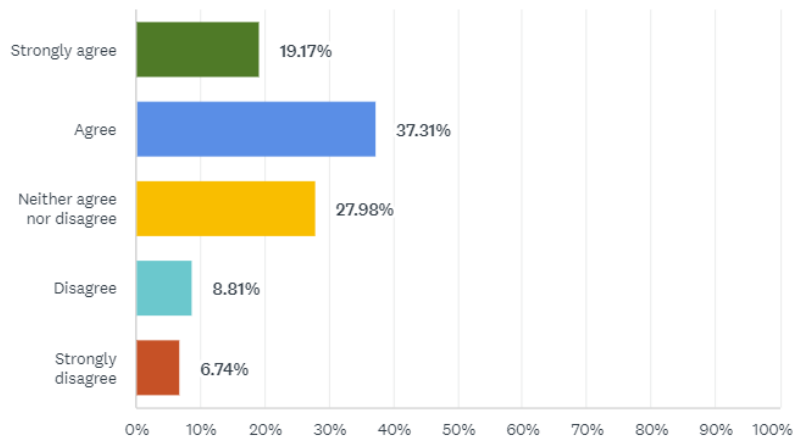
### Service: I understand what is expected of me in my current role

Answered: 194 Skipped: 2



### Service: I can offer the best service here

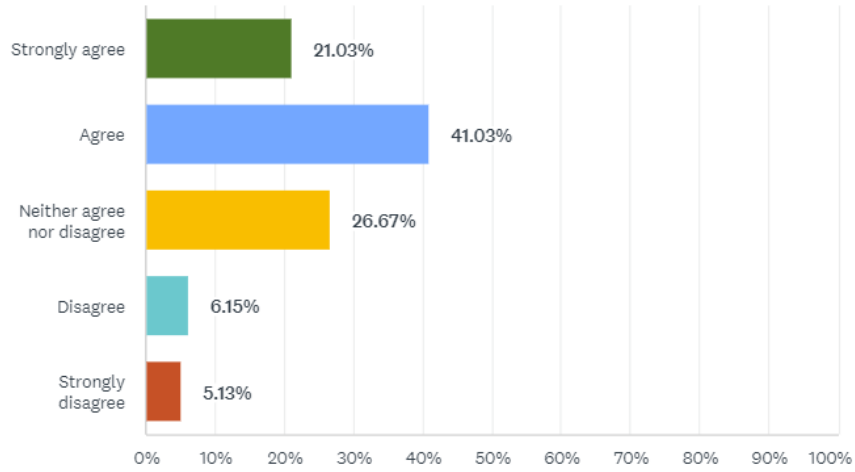
Answered: 193 Skipped: 3





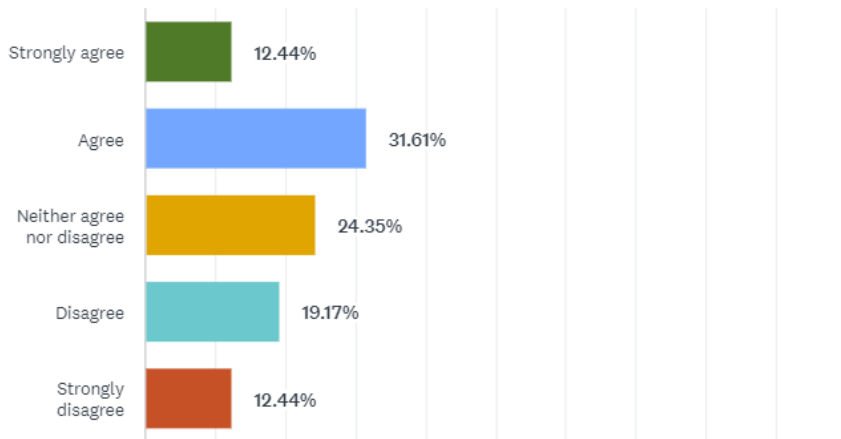
### Together: My team is resilient

Answered: 195 Skipped: 1



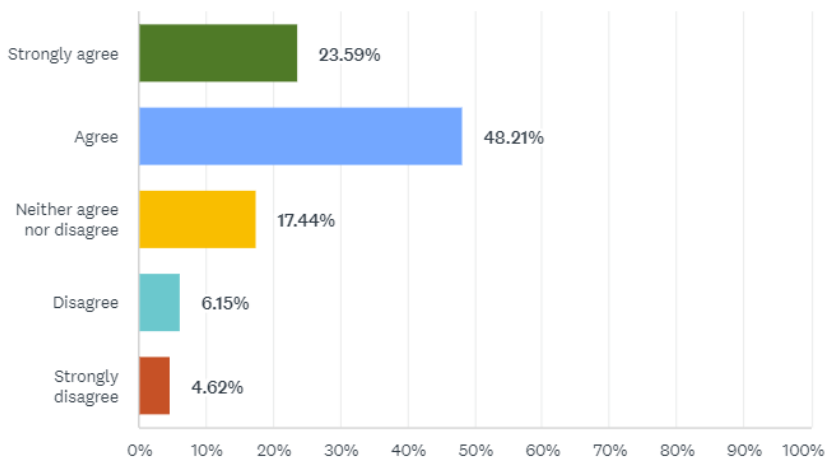
### Together: I feel a part of the team

Answered: 193 Skipped: 3



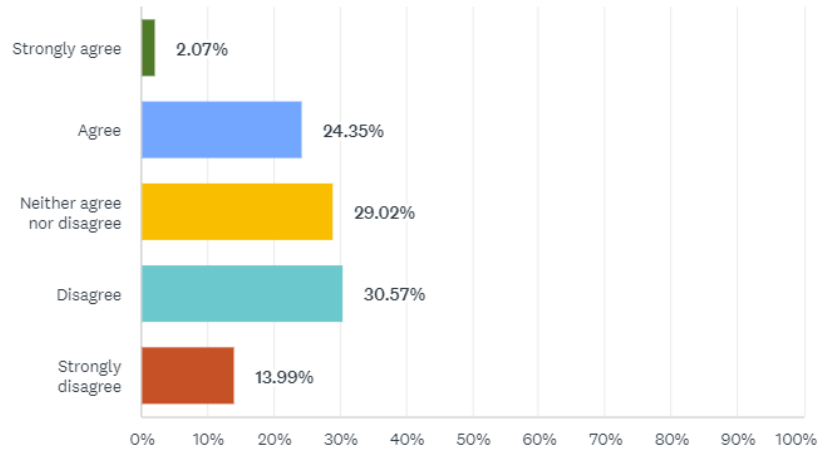
### Together: My team works well together

Answered: 195 Skipped: 1



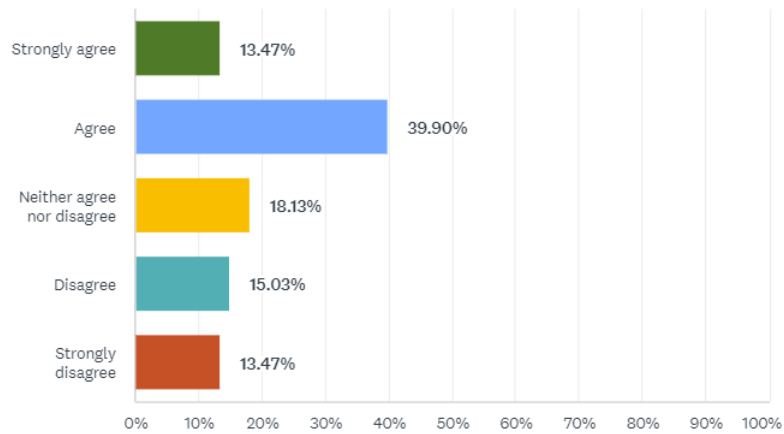
### Voice: My needs are understood

Answered: 193 Skipped: 3



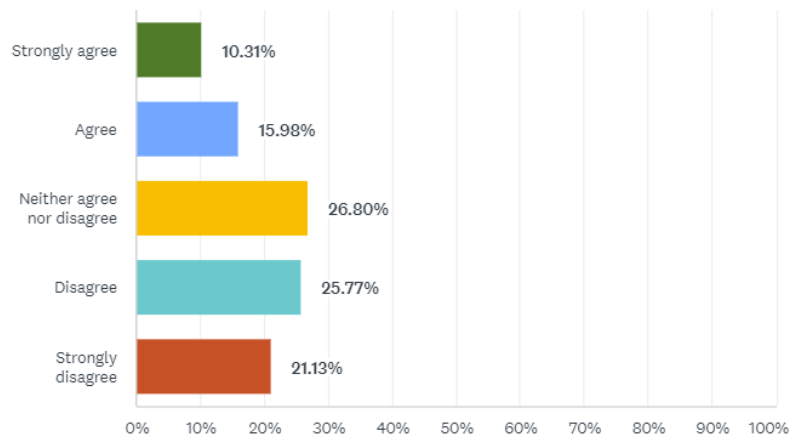
### Voice: I can express my views and suggestions

Answered: 193 Skipped: 3



### Voice: My voice matters

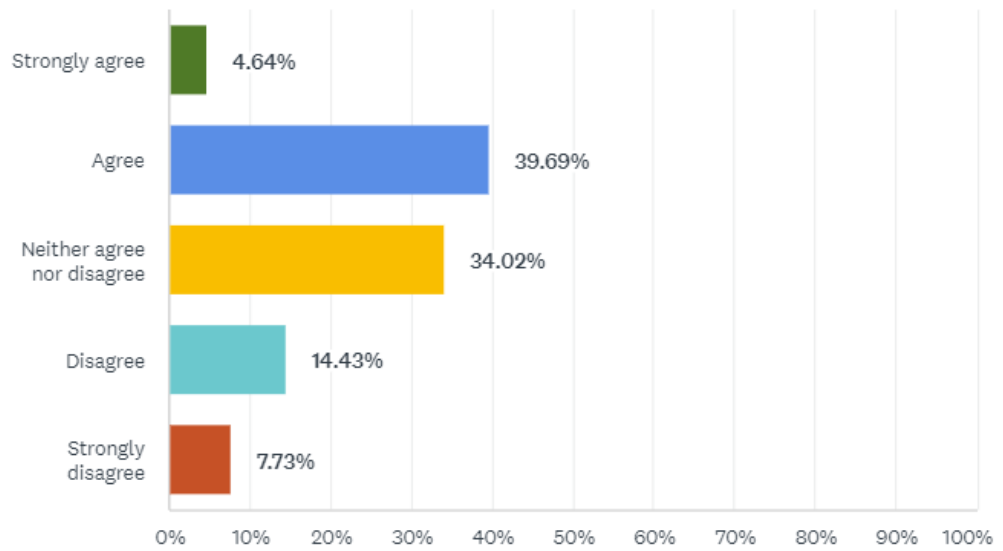
Answered: 194 Skipped: 2





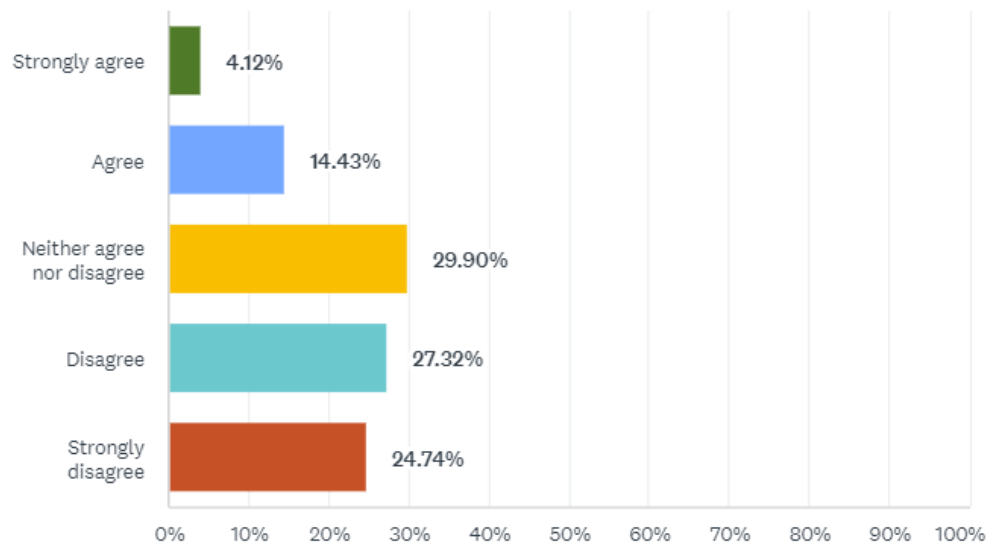
## Overall: I know what our shared values are

Answered: 194 Skipped: 2



## Overall: There is a positive culture here

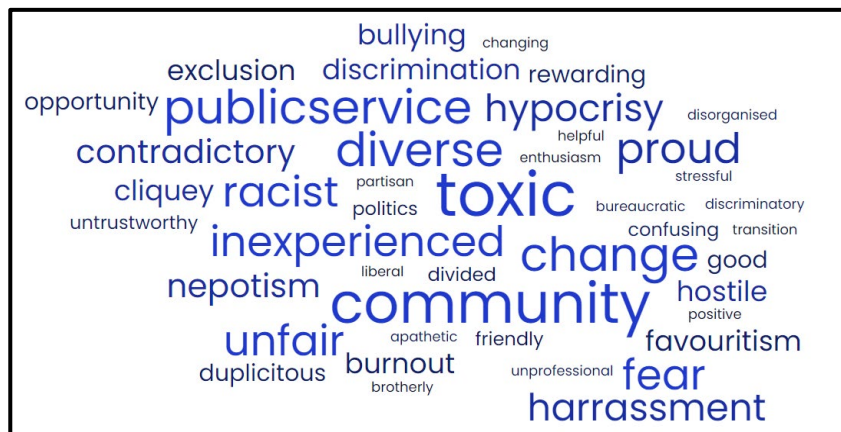
Answered: 194 Skipped: 2



## Word maps from survey results & engagement

The below word maps have been compiled using key words and phrases used in the two free text box questions from the survey which asked the following questions; a) describe the culture you work in and b) describe what we can do better and engagement in person. The font size, in each of the word maps is reflective of how often the word was used.

In the below image, which includes the responses to the question ‘describe the culture you work in’ contains a mixture of words which portray the positive, negative and status quo. The positives from the responses highlighted that there is a good sense of community – by far the word used the most, people are proud of the public service they provide and of their diverse workforce. The negative words that were used most frequently were toxic, racist and fear. Toxic was used in relation to PSD matters and from the sense that there was unfairness in parts of the organisation. Fear was used in context to repercussions of speaking out and not being listened too. Racist was also used.



The word map on the right highlights the areas in the organisation that can be improved upon. Training and resources were mentioned frequently as were transparent and policies.

