Institute for Public Safety Crime and Justice

Key Messages

- Bedfordshire provided PSV data for those under 19 years old, and thus all PSVs had served less than 3 years. No data was included for those over age 19.
- In total, 15 PSVs completed the national survey, achieving an estimated 18% response rate from Bedfordshire. The results show that PSVs in Bedfordshire compared to the national average were:
    - Slightly less likely to agree that the Force maximises the use of the time that they give;
    - Slightly less likely to agree they felt supported by their line manager;
    - Less likely to agree the Force communicates with them sufficiently;
    - Relationships with staff and officers were positive, but slightly stronger for staff;
    - Less likely to receive sufficient ongoing training to remain effective as a volunteer; and
    - Slightly less likely to agree their morale was good and they felt valued.
- The most common suggestions to improve the volunteering experience in Bedfordshire were for better utilisation of volunteers' existing skills, and for a better understanding of volunteers and their contribution.
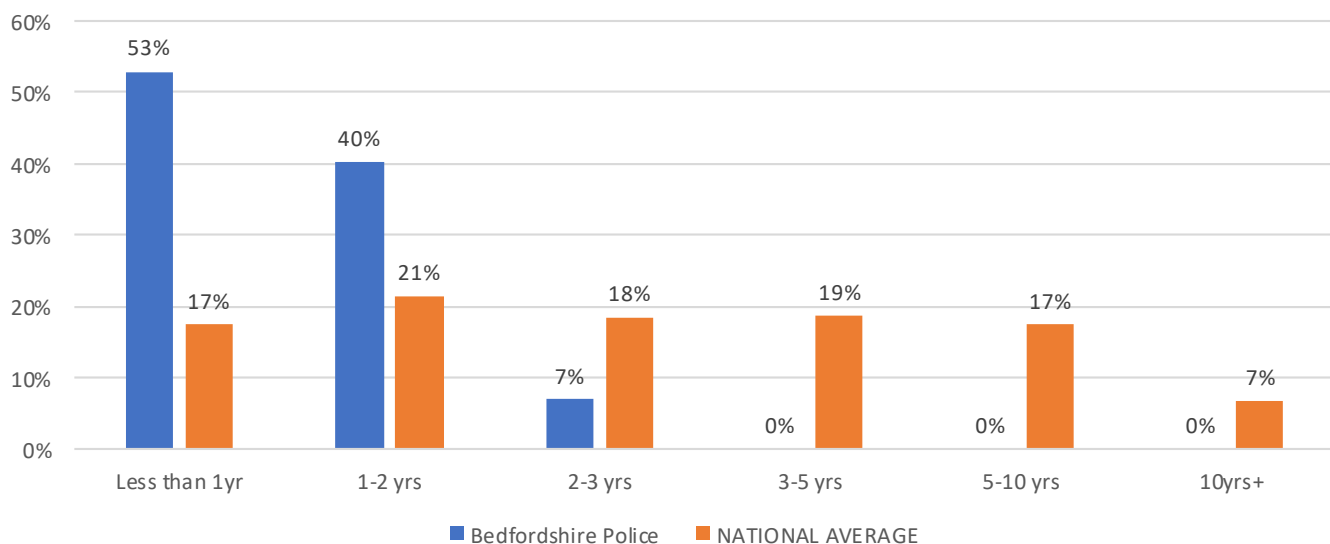
Introduction

The purpose of this police brief is to summarise the key findings from the national reports and contextualise the results relating to Bedfordshire. Therefore, it is supplementary to the national benchmarking report (Britton *et al.*, 2021) and the national survey results report (Callender *et al.*, 2021).

Key Statistics from Benchmarking Report

Of 25 forces (out of 44 surveyed) which provided data on hours served by PSVs, it was estimated that on average each PSV completed **25 hours per year**. Based on the estimated total number of PSVs nationally, this equates to approximately **190,000** hours total. It is noted, however, this data has been gathered over the Covid-19 period, when the vast majority of forces have seen a marked reduction in PSV activity due to lockdowns, shielding, and other health and practical concerns. Bedfordshire only provided data for volunteers aged 19 and younger, and only counted these individuals in the number of PSVs provided. No data was provided for gender, or total number of hours.

Length of Service Profile

|	Less than 1yr	1-2 yrs	2-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10yrs+
Bedfordshire Police	53%	40%	7%	0%	0%	0%
NATIONAL AVERAGE	17%	21%	18%	19%	17%	7%

Leavers

Nationally, the majority of PSVs included in this leavers data had left after at least 4 years of service. The average number of months a PSV had served prior to them leaving was 39.3. Personal Reasons were the most common reason for leaving the PSV role, with 31.7% of the sample leaving due to this. 14.4% were stopping being a PSV due to a career change and 10% had their voluntary employment terminated.

In Bedfordshire, there were 4 leavers captured in the benchmarking file for the year 20/21, however no further data was submitted regarding reasons for leaving or the average length of time served prior to stopping volunteering, other than for PSVs under 19. This would account for the skewed length of service data, in which all PSVs are shown to have served less than 3 years.

Key Findings from the National Survey of PSVs

Overall, **1,305** Police Support Volunteers (PSVs) completed the survey, which represents a **17%** response rate against benchmarking data where it is detailed that there are approximately **7,632** PSVs nationwide. There were **15** PSVs who completed the survey from Bedfordshire, which represents a **18%** response rate against benchmarking data where it was detailed there are **85** PSVs.
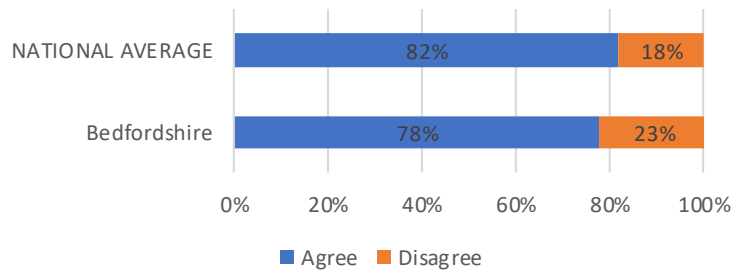
### PSV Survey Responses per Force
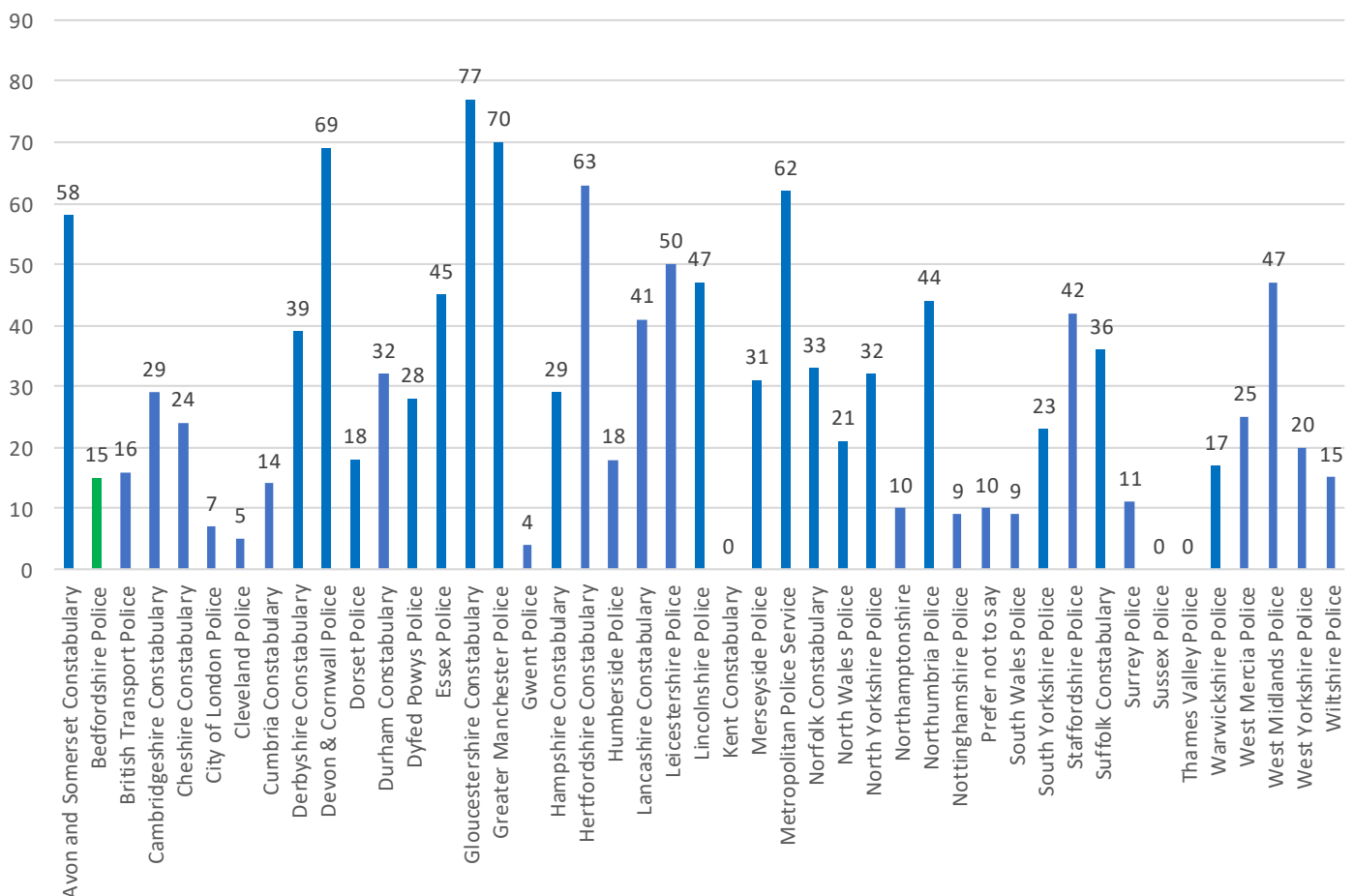
Key Findings

MANAGEMENT: In terms of management, a similar proportion of PSVs to the national average agreed that they felt supported by their line manager, and a slightly lower proportion than the national average felt their Force maximised the time they gave. A smaller proportion of PSVs felt their Force communicated with them sufficiently.
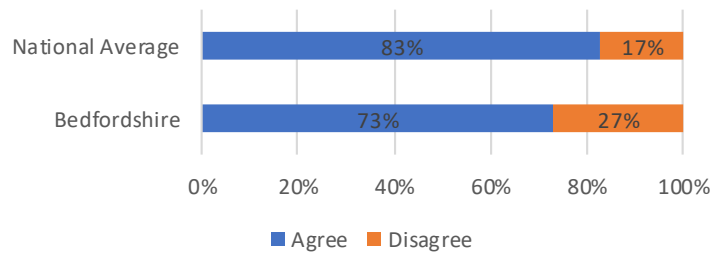
The force maximises the time that I give them

	Agree	Disagree
NATIONAL AVERAGE	82%	18%
Bedfordshire	78%	23%

I feel supported by my line manager

	Agree	Disagree
NATIONAL AVERAGE	89%	11%
Bedfordshire	91%	9%
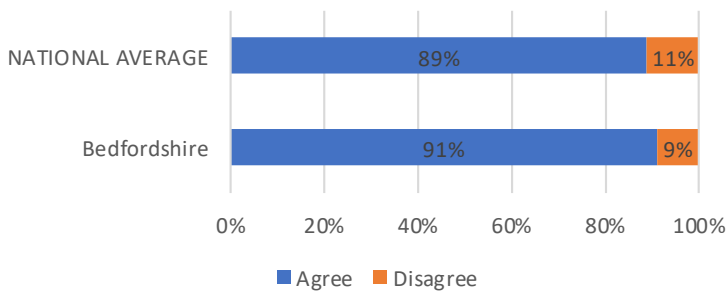
The Force communicates sufficiently with me as a volunteer

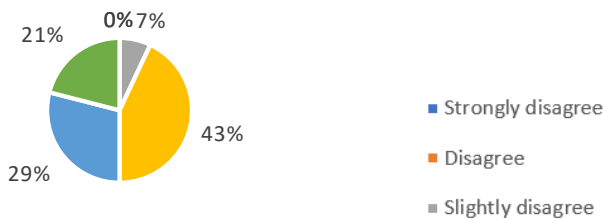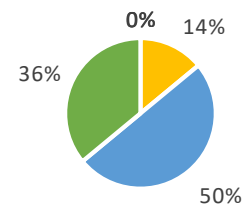|	Agree	Disagree
National Average	83%	17%
Bedfordshire	73%	27%

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OFFICERS AND STAFF:

In terms of relationships with officers and staff, the strength of agreement for feeling respected and having a good relationship were slightly stronger for relationships with staff than they were for officers, though the results overall are very positive with very few survey respondents disagreeing with the statements below.

"The people I have helped have expressed their appreciation, and this makes me feel my role is worthwhile and rewarding"
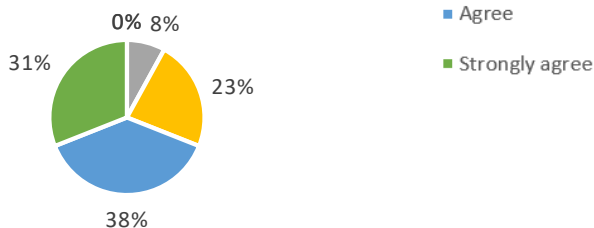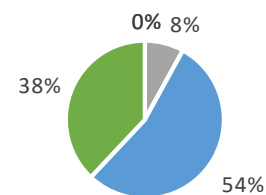
I feel respected by officers

0% 7%
21%
43%
29%

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Slightly agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I have a good relationship with officers

0% 14%
36%
50%
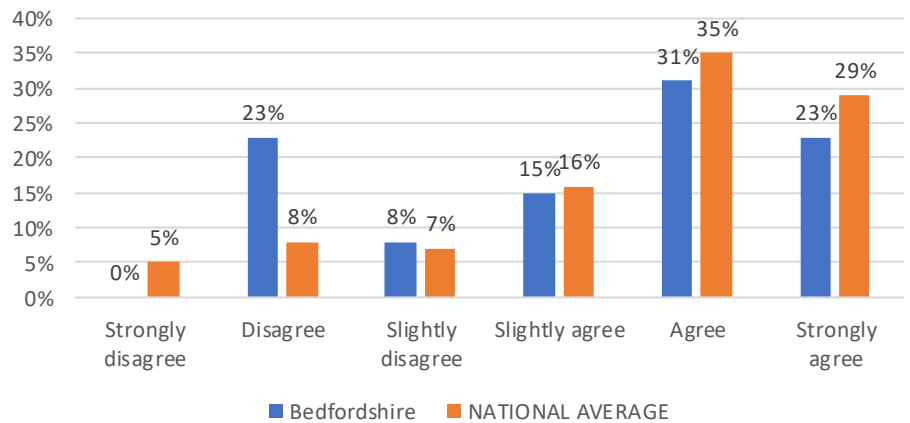
I feel respected by staff

0% 8%
31%
23%
38%

I have a good relationship with staff

0% 8%
38%
54%

"If I did not do the job I do volunteering, the work would have to be carried out by a paid member of staff"

3

I am receiving sufficient ongoing training to remain effective in my role as a volunteer

TRAINING: In terms of training, fewer PSVs agreed that they received sufficient ongoing training to remain effective in their role as volunteer (69% vs. 80%) respectively compared to the national average.

Bar chart values:
- Strongly disagree: Bedfordshire 0%, National Average 5%
- Disagree: Bedfordshire 23%, National Average 8%
- Slightly disagree: Bedfordshire 8%, National Average 7%
- Slightly agree: Bedfordshire 15%, National Average 16%
- Agree: Bedfordshire 31%, National Average 35%
- Strongly agree: Bedfordshire 23%, National Average 29%

■ Bedfordshire ■ NATIONAL AVERAGE

Bedfordshire PSV Feedback: How can the volunteering experience be improved?
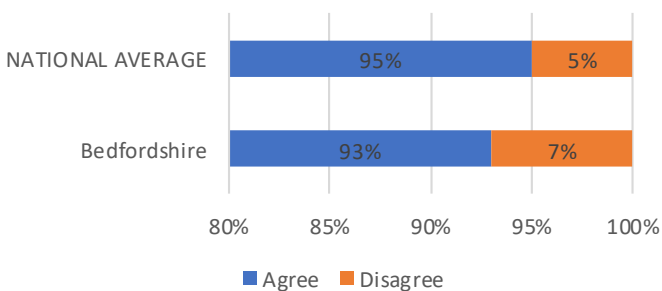
9 PSVs from Bedfordshire Police Force recommended ways in which their volunteering experience could be improved. The most common suggestions were for better utilisation of volunteers' existing skills, and for a better understanding and recognition of volunteers and their contribution.

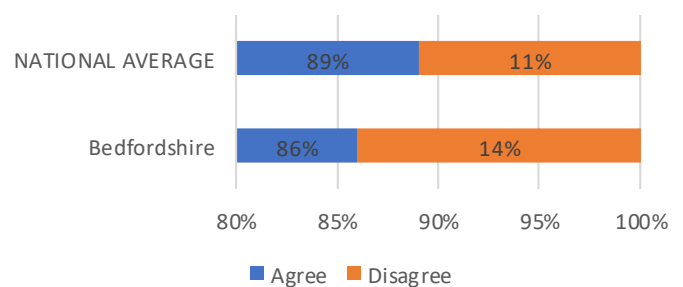*"More and better use of my talents, experience, and training."*

"It would be better if the existence of myself and my colleagues was more widely known throughout the organisation"

MORALE AND VALUE: A slightly lower proportion of PSVs agreed that morale was good in Bedfordshire compared to the national average. There was also a lower proportion of PSVs who felt valued by the Force.

I would describe my morale as being good

- NATIONAL AVERAGE: Agree 95%, Disagree 5%
- Bedfordshire: Agree 93%, Disagree 7%

■ Agree ■ Disagree

I feel valued by my force

- NATIONAL AVERAGE: Agree 89%, Disagree 11%
- Bedfordshire: Agree 86%, Disagree 14%

■ Agree ■ Disagree