Emotional Labour and Public Protection Policing:

The experience and impact of emotional labour on Police Scotland public protection police officers

SiPR | Scottish Institute for Policing Research

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3. Introduction

There is a significant body of research that illustrates the emotional demands of policing and the physical and psychological toll this takes on officers and staff. However, the management of these demands, particularly in more specialist roles such as those in public protection policing where the demand may be higher, are less well understood. This research explores the experiences of public protection police officers in Police Scotland through a lens of emotional labour.

The aims of this research were to:

• Critically review the literature around the emotional impacts of policing on officers and the role of emotional labour in policing;

• Establish the experience of, and impact on, officers involved in the investigation of public protection cases; assess how police officers in roles where emotional labour may be heightened, manage their emotions and the strategies they develop to do so; and

• Examine how emotions and emotion management are mediated by organisational, departmental and role values, demands and culture

In doing so, the research sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the emotional experience of police officers in public protection roles and what impact does it have on them?

2. What emotional labour do officers undertake, and what strategies of emotion management do officers employ?

3. To what extent does the theory of emotional labour explain the experiences of public protection police officers?

4. What role does the prevailing organisational culture play in the emotion management strategies of public protection policing?

This report presents the findings from this research and a potential framework for understanding the factors that contribute to resilience within the context of public protection policing.

4. Literature review

4.1 THE EMOTIONAL DEMANDS OF POLICING

It is widely acknowledged that policing is a profession that is inherently stressful and in the course of 'routine work', police officers often work in situations which are emotionally demanding (Daus & Brown, 2014; Foley & Massey, 2020; Huey & Kalyal, 2017; Schaible & Six, 2015; Sherwood et al, 2019; Williams et al, 2010).

For some, the effects of this can take its toll and the connection between the emotional demands of operational policing and poor mental and physical health among police officers and police staff is documented in contemporary research (Bakker & Heuven, 2006; Elliott-Davies & Houdmont, 2016; Foley & Massey, 2020; Lennie, Crozier & Sutton, 2020; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Miller & Burchell, 2020; MIND, 2015; Schaible and Six, 2015; Sherwood et al, 2019). Holdaway (2017) suggests this is set against a backdrop of public service cuts and austerity and increased public and political scrutiny which also adds to the demands placed on police officers at all ranks. However, the majority of this research concerns 'routine' police work (Miller & Burchell, 2020) and in particular 'front-line' police officers who respond to incidents where they face a risk of, or experience, violence or harm to themselves, but neglects those in more specialist roles.

While it is recognised that some specific roles or types of police work are more emotionally demanding than others, such as those involving cases typically dealt with by Public Protection Units as well as missing persons and homicide investigations (Foley & Massey, 2020; Gray & Rydon-Grange, 2019; MacEachern et al, 2019; Parkes et al, 2018; Roach et al, 2017; 2018), there is a paucity of research on how those demands are managed (or not) by the officers involved. Literature that does exist tends not to focus on how emotion management is enacted, but details the consequences when strategies are ineffective, for example post-traumatic stress disorder and burn out.

For example, a recent UK study by Miller & Burchell (2020), highlighted the emotional demands of policing, including in some instances, direct or indirect exposure to trauma. They concluded that almost one in five police officers suffer from either post-traumatic stress disorder or complex post-traumatic stress disorder, a rate almost five times more than the general population. They also suggest that two thirds of the 16,857 officers surveyed in their research felt they had a 'mental health problem' and 93% of these stated they would continue working despite it. Further, Brewin et al (2020) in their survey of police officers found PTSD and complex PTSD in 20.6% of their sample of 9929 survey respondents & MacEachern et al (2019) report secondary traumatic stress in over half of a sample of 63 detectives working in Family Protection Units in England. It is clear police officers face risks to their emotional and mental health, and insightful as this literature is in this regard, it does not shed light on officers' experiences, of, or their strategies for managing, the emotional demands of the role.

There is also a small body of work that suggests a connection between investigative and child protection roles, and burnout. Perez et al (2010) in their study of staff involved in investigations of images of child abuse, found that 54% were suffering from high levels of emotional exhaustion. McMillan (2014) also discussed the welfare concerns of Sexual Offence Liaison Officers which included fatigue and burnout. Research suggests those working in roles such as Family Liaison Officers, child protection and some investigative roles, experience high levels of burnout as a result of 'compassion fatigue' and feelings of injustice (Anderson, 2000; Conrad & Kellar-Guenthur, 2006; Foley & Massey, 2020; Huey & Kalyal, 2017). It is suggested that compassion fatigue can be mitigated to a degree by successful case outcomes such as identifying suspects, arrest and prosecution, or feelings that they have personally 'made a difference' (Foley & Massey, 2020; MacEachern et al, 2019).

4.2 EMOTIONS AND EMOTION MANAGEMENT IN POLICING

These bodies of work offer us insight into the effects of some aspects of police work on officers, however what is less well understood is how officers engage in emotion management. At the heart of policing are human encounters - interactions between police officers and members of the public. These encounters may form the basis for how the public feel about the police, their levels of trust, confidence in, and respect of, individual officers and the police as a service, or their sense of justice and the legitimacy the police hold. This in turn may influence a member of the public's future interactions and their cooperation in law enforcement (Black and Lumsden, 2021). Yet, many of these interactions occur in an emotionally demanding context for both the officer and the member of the public. For example, when responding to a report of domestic abuse, sexual violence or child abuse, a fatal road traffic collision, suicide, murder or serious public disorder.

4.3 EMOTIONAL LABOUR

The emotional demands of policing on officers can be understood through the concept of emotional labour (Hochschild, 2013). Emotional labour refers to the way employees regulate their own personal emotions in order to display organizationally desired ones. This can be achieved by suppressing emotions that are personally felt but not 'desirable' within the context of a particular role, and expressing emotions that may not be personally felt, but are expected within that role. Emotional labour generally takes place in settings where employees have contact with people external to the organisation (e.g. general public, or customers), involve some sort of face to face or verbal interaction, or where some sort of service is provided, and where the person is required to produce an emotional state in another while also managing their own emotional response (Steinberg & Figart, 1999).

Hochschild (2013) identifies three conditions that employees must fulfil for them to engage in emotional labour. The first is, they must interact directly with other people whether that is the public or other colleagues, including line managers or executive officers. The second is that they are expected to manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of those with whom they interact. In a policing context, this could mean members of the public who are in distress or despair, who are angry or frustrated. The management of one's own emotions along with those of the public in emotionally charged circumstances may therefore be particularly challenging in an emotionally charged context. The third condition is that the employer should have some control over the emotional displays of the employee, usually through training

and supervision. The degree to which this applies to police officers and other public service professionals has been challenged given that many do not work under the direct gaze of supervisors and police officers are afforded varying degrees of discretion and autonomy in the course of their work, particularly in response or community teams (Guy et al, 2008; Mastracci et al, 2012). However, Wouters (1989) suggests those with more autonomy in their decision making are more likely to have better emotional management skills than those in roles where they are more closely supervised.

Scholars have expanded on the concept of emotional labour, suggesting more elaborate models of understanding emotion work in occupational settings, with particular relevance to contexts where those engaged in the work would not be considered 'service sector' workers, and where the motive of the work is not profit. Bolton (2005) proposes a typology of emotion management in the workplace of the 4Ps. These four types of emotional management are: pecuniary; presentational, philanthropic and prescriptive. She argues that an individuals' emotional management skills are used in all aspects of organisational life. Pecuniary emotional management is where emotions are used for commercial gain, and prescriptive emotion management is emotion management enacted in line with organisational and professional rules of conduct in any particular setting. Presentational emotion management is that determined by general social rules in any given culture and philanthropic emotion management is that done as 'gift'.

Emotions that are publicly displayed rather than those that are felt are sometimes referred to as 'display rules' (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). These display rules are therefore, "behavioural expectations about which emotions ought to be expressed and which ought to be hidden" (Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989, p.8). These display rules exist at a wider cultural level and as such, the expression of emotion in a workplace is influenced by the wider culture in which the organisation is based. At an organisational level, display rules serve a purpose within the context of that organisation as they achieve the aims and objectives set by the police. These are referred to as 'occupational norms' (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). Within the police, these rules form a part of a shared set of values and norms within that occupational community which in turn is bound by codes of practice which determine appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and conduct (ibid).

Police work is also situated in a wider context of public service cuts in staffing and resources, and increasing demands for service (Bakker and Heuven, 2006; Chan, 2007). It is also positioned in an organisational culture traditionally conceived as being steeped in a masculinised sense of mission, reactive styles of policing, danger and action where 'outcomes', upholding the law and risk mitigation are prioritised, and where 'soft skills' can be undervalued and emotion is often suppressed (Bacon, 2014;

Brown, 2000; Cockcroft, 2020; Hawk and Dabney, 2014; Loftus, 2010; MacEachern et al, 2018; Reiner, 2010; Walsh et al, 2013). The management and display of emotions is also shaped by different police roles and functions and the changing context of policing to one of new public management, accountability, and the professionalization of policing (Black and Lumsden, 2021). In addition, public protection policing may not 'fit' well within an outcome focused framework of policing since it is often 'inconclusive' and despite the clear importance of the work for both individuals and society, in some forces it can be considered lower status (McMillan, 2014). Therefore, any study of policing and emotional labour cannot ignore the influence of these macro, meso and micro factors that shape the experiences and practice of emotion management in policing and the way occupational identity assumes an ability to manage, control and suppress emotions in order to maintain a 'public face' while simultaneously navigating coping mechanisms to manage job stressors such as those physical, political, social, legal, organisational or symbolic demands placed on officers in the commission of their duties (Brown, 2000; Chan, 2007; Black and Lumsden, 2021).

Work exploring emotional labour in policing is limited, but the small body of work that does exist suggests that the complex nature of policing may give rise to contradictions that result in high degrees of emotional labour (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2016; Black & Lumsden, 2021; Huey & Kalyal, 2017). For example, officers may need to suppress feelings that this type of police work may invoke such as fear, anger, sadness, and abhorrence, and display in both public and organizational spheres, often conflicting emotions such as compassion and empathy towards victims and toughness towards suspects (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2016; Brunetto et al, 2012; Daus & Brown, 2012; Huey & Kalyal, 2017; Lennie et al, 2018). For example, officers may feel anger or disgust towards an offender, but will need to display emotional neutrality and calmness towards them, simultaneously displaying empathy towards a victim (Van Gelderen, et al, 2007; Shuler and Sypher, 2008).

If policing requires officers to perform emotional labour in order to suppress feelings and to project the desired outward emotional presentation, this can be performed in two different ways. The first is 'surface acting' whereby the officer, "simulates the emotions to be displayed in order to produce a desired emotional reaction in another

person" (Adams and Buck, 2010; Phillips et al, 2021). This may be likened to wearing a 'mask' and simulating feelings that they do not feel. The second is 'deep acting' whereby an officer's emotional display is one which regulates their inner feelings and aligns them with those expected by the organisation, through a process of invoking emotions through experience or through a 'trained imagination' (Grandey et al, 2007; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987). Thus 'deep acting' can also be conceived of in two ways. 'Active deep acting' refers to the way an officer may draw on their own experiences to empathise with a member of the public in order to display expected emotions. In contrast, 'passive deep acting' is where an officer already feels some of the expected emotion in a given situation and therefore less effort is needed to ensure these feelings align with those expected (Phillips et al, 2021).

There are two other ways in which emotional labour is performed. The first is where an officer's own genuine feelings are in alignment with those expected of them which means a genuine response is displayed. However, this still may need to be regulated. The second is detachment. This is evident is situations where officers may feel they need to remove any emotional engagement with a person and 'depersonalise' the relationship. This has a 'self-protective function' and requires effort to suppress feelings or for example anger, disgust or frustration to ensure professional expectations are upheld (Kadowaki, 2015; Schaible and Six, 2015). Tracy and Tracy (1998) also refer to the way in which officers are expected to manage not only their emotions but the emotions of the members of public with whom they have contact, referring to it as 'double-faced emotion management'. For example, in their study of call takers, they observed the way staff navigated the caller's feeling of fear or anger and their own feelings of irritation, disgust, even amusement.

While emotional labour is not in and of itself harmful, studies have suggested that poor emotion management in policing, particularly when engaging in 'deep acting' leads to poor performance, isolation, cynicism, exhaustion (Hawk and Dabney, 2014; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Van Gelderen et al, 2011), burnout (Lennie et al, 2020p; Phillips et al, 2021), impaired personal relationships (Chapman, 2009; Huey & Kalyal, 2017; Lennie et al, 2020) and PTSD (Lennie et al, 2020). This can occur when the required emotions are negative and officers attempt to align their own feelings to that negativity. As such, 'surface acting' may be less 'harmful' than attempts at 'deep acting' particularly as it may allow an officer to distance themselves from particularly traumatic situations (Shaible and Six, 2015). However, it is widely acknowledged that where an officer engages in 'surface acting', this can also result in feelings of being disingenuous or insincere, which in turn may lead to cynicism, job dissatisfaction, job alienation or disillusionment, even burnout (Bakker and Heuven, 2006; Phillips et al, 2021). Similarly,

Barkworth and Murphy (2015) suggest that if an officer's actions generates a negative emotional response, this may lead to non-compliance on the part of the member of public they are dealing with. Thus perceived procedural injustice may generate negative emotions such as anger or frustration, which may then lead to future non-compliance with law enforcement. In contrast, Schaible and Six (2015) suggest that 'surface acting' and the ability to display a range of emotions releases officers from the tendency to display particular, organizationally expected emotions, particularly negative ones. As such they can select the most appropriate display to achieve the necessary ends of an interaction.

In contrast, there are reported positive outcomes to the performance of emotional labour, although these are not specific to policing. Wharton (1998) suggests that those who undertake effective emotion management gain more job satisfaction. Guy et al (2008) also point out that emotional labour gives meaning to an individual's work and Bhowmick and Mulla (2016) also suggest that deep acting often results in job satisfaction and a reduction in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, where emotions are more authentically felt by the officer. Other reported positive consequences include increased task effectiveness (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Harris, 2002), increased self-esteem (Wharton and Erikson, 1993), psychological wellbeing (Conrad and Witte, 1994) and an increased sense of community (Shuler and Sypher, 2000) As such, Huey & Kalyal (2017) and Daus & Brown (2012) argue that effective police work relies on the ability of officers to express and manage their emotions appropriately and authentically. Emotional labour therefore may only be problematic when there is a lack of alignment between an officer's sense of identity or values, or expectations or understanding of what their role should be. This may result in value or emotional dissonance (Lumsden and Black, 2021)

It is evident that the wellbeing of police officers and police staff is being taken seriously by Police Scotland in their use of, for example, a Trauma Risk Management approach for officers who have been exposed to trauma (Police Scotland, 2024). However, it is unclear from the limited research on the impact of emotional labour in policing, particularly in the UK (Lennie et al, 2020; Lumsden & Black, 2018), and especially in relation to public protection policing and criminal investigation (Huey & Kalyal, 2017), how emotion management is optimised. Protecting vulnerable people is also a policing priority (Police Scotland, 2020). This has increased the emotional demands and expectations of officers, but it is unclear whether this is matched by any reduction in tension between organisational or departmental culture and the impact of emotional labour and management (Lennie et al, 2020) and it is this, as well as the impact on, and emotional managements strategies of officers themselves, that we have explored.

5. Methodology

The project employed a case study design and qualitative analytic approach.

5.1 SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

A purposive sample was drawn from a population list of public protection officers provided by Police Scotland. The inclusion criteria were that officers must be currently serving with Police Scotland in a public protection role within the last 24 months. Officers were contacted by email and invited to participate. Each officer was provided with a participant information sheet and consent form.

5.2 SAMPLE

All participants (22) were serving police officers of ranks ranging from Detective Constable to Detective Superintendent working in all remit areas of public protection teams in Police Scotland. Participants had service ranging from 11 – 32 years (mean: 21 years) and experience within public protection roles from between 2 – 18 years (mean: 10 years).

5.3 INTERVIEW PROCESS

Each officer participated in an individual, in depth, semi structured interview lasting from between 45 – 90 minutes. Interviews were conducted using Microsoft Teams and recorded and transcribed verbatim.

5.4 ANALYSIS

Data were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), guided by the aims, objectives and research questions, while taking cognisance of new and emergent themes.

5.5 ETHICS

Ethical approval was gained from Glasgow Caledonian University's Glasgow School for Business and Society Ethics Committee. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality and assured that no individual would be identified in the write-up of the research. There are a number of ethical considerations when conducting research on emotional wellbeing, and aspects of public protection policing, given the sensitivity of the cases, and the emotionally demanding nature of the role. While conducting the interviews, we were aware that some officers may have well developed strategies for managing the demands of the role, and ensuring their emotional and mental wellbeing, but for others it may have been a more sensitive topic, particularly if the demands of emotional labour have taken their toll. All participants were provided with appropriate signposting to internal and external support services, irrespective of whether they expressed distress or not.

6. Findings

This part of the report discusses the findings from interviews with participants. It draws out participant's feelings and ideas concerning emotional expression and emotional literacy, including what emotions they expressed and those they feel they were not able to express, and how they both recognised and engaged in emotional labour. This section also discusses officers' adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with the emotions that derive from public protection policing, and the consequences and impact of their work and the coping strategies they employ. It also discusses organisational responses and police culture as they apply to emotion management in public protection policing. This includes both historical and current practices and attitudes, as well as the changes in, and enduring features of, police culture.

6.1 EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION AND LITERACY

6.1.1 Emotions expressed

Participants described a range of positive and negative emotions associated with their work including a sense of joy and achievement, and pride in their work, camaraderie, and a satisfaction when a 'result' was achieved. This was usually when there was a conviction, but also when multi-agency cooperation was effective in protecting a victim, when a victim received the support an officer perceived would keep them safe, or when an officer felt they had 'made a difference'. In contrast, most participants also identified more challenging emotions including a sense of anger, disbelief, sadness and frustration in their work. Anger was often as a consequence of how a victim had been treated by a perpetrator or towards a suspect who had committed serious offences. Disbelief and sadness were associated with the nature of the offending, particularly in the context of offences against children. However, frustration was the most common emotion expressed by participants. This was often felt in the context of the criminal justice process. For example, when juries failed to come to a guilty verdict or when juries and Procurator Fiscals were perceived by officers to have a lack of understanding of legislation or the evidence presented to them. But it was also felt in terms of wanting to do more, to improve their service, but not having the resources to do so.

Participants also described feeling empathy towards victims, particularly in instances where an offence or victim was 'relatable'. For example, in cases where a child was the same age as the officer's own child, or when dealing with offences against children when the officer was pregnant. This could be viewed as forms of both active and passive 'deep acting' (Phillips et al, 2021). Other emotions included exhaustion and weariness, and some participants reflected that the workload for PPU officers and 'over deployment' to particularly distressing scenes or cases such as child deaths contributed to, or masked, negative emotions.

"…and some of the emotions might actually be like exhaustion and weariness as opposed to sadness or anger at people but I think that's probably something that'll mask it as well just the sheer volume of work that people are doing that they might not have time to actually stop and draw breath and think about things and show things because they're just having to keep going and keep going and keep going" P3

6.1.2 Emotions not expressed

Some participants found it very difficult to articulate emotions in the interview, relying instead on simply describing the need to "be professional" or feeling just anger and frustration. Some officers reported 'not thinking about' and not feeling any emotions or being 'affected' by any cases. While this was adaptive for some, and represented a capacity to resist the emotional demands of the job, offering some degree of compartmentalisation, for others it represented a general reduction in the capacity feel emotion at all. One (P5) describes being "emotionally inept" and "immune" to their own and others' emotions. Another (P12) stated that their spouse referred to them as "emotionally dead", a sentiment that they agreed with, and another was described by a spouse as '"an emotional husk" (P20). It is not clear whether this is how these individuals experienced their emotional world prior to public protection policing, and how they have dealt with emotion throughout their lifetime, or if it is also the consequence of exposure to such emotionally demanding material.

Some of those participants who stated they sometimes felt anger or upset, described the need to suppress these feelings. For some this was 'part of the job' or 'daily business' and an integral part of being 'professional'. This was described as being achieved by having a 'professional head' – creating an alternative mindset that enabled a level of distance between an officer's real emotions and those that were required for display in a given situation (Brown, 2000; Chan, 2007; Black and Lumsden, 2021). Others described this as 'swallowing' feelings to 'keep a level head'.

"I think we suppress loads. I think probably as humans we do anyway to be honest 'cause I think if we had to keep all this trauma and live it every day we wouldn't survive". P2

"Police officers don't express their feelings, it's how they cope. It doesn't affect most officers in a massive way. People suppress that stuff". P5

"Because of what he [a suspect] had done and inside you're just screaming, and you actually feel the rage just building inside, but how dare you, you've caused so much harm, you don't know the affects you've had on the child, so yes you have to supress your emotions a lot. P15

This suppression is often associated with compassion fatigue (Anderson, 2000; Conrad & Kellar-Guenthur, 2006; Foley & Massey, 2020; Huey & Kalyal, 2017). One officer described this as:

"…a big tub. You've got all these emotions and feelings and you're dealing with victims constantly and I've seen it a few times, with different people where you just get to a point where you just switch off to the trauma. That can be good to help you with your job at times. But overall it's negative." P1

Most officers were able to identify this in themselves or others, particularly in the context of repeat victims of domestic abuse and having to suppress frustration when support has been provided but a victim has remained with an abuser. This is discussed further in section 7.4.

6.2 EMOTIONAL LABOUR

Most participants recognised the emotional labour involved in their work and the conflict between the expectations of the public and Police Scotland in terms of what emotions are displayed – the organisational display rules (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1989) – and the emotions they feel. Organisational display rules were articulated most commonly as 'professionalism'. However, 'professionalism' was contextualised in relation to whether an officer was dealing with a victim or a suspect. For example, while being 'professional' meant being impartial and controlled, participants described the need to strike a balance between making an emotional connection with victims but not showing feelings of upset or sadness or expressing these feelings by crying. Participants also acknowledged that victims did not expect them to be 'robotic', emotionless or lacking humanity. Some participants attributed this to a public desire for the police to be 'human' rather than *"…having the big, bad, cop face, poker detective face on…"* P4.

"I think sometimes for the police as well, there's always this expectation that we will be almost kind of like not emotive and we'll just present the facts and we'll be very factual in our opinions but we're still human and we do still have thoughts and feelings". P2

Some participants referred to a 'game face' that is adaptable to any given situation, whether dealing with a suspect or a victim. While this may appear to be disingenuous, it is functional and purposive, particularly in the face of extreme emotions and expectations from the public, colleagues (particularly those in supervisory roles) or other professionals (Brown, 2000; Chan, 2007; Black and Lumsden, 2021). This can be likened to 'surface acting' (Phillips et al, 2021) or 'wearing a mask' whereby an officer

simulates feelings that they do no necessarily feel. Others referred to this as a defence mechanism where they suppressed emotions and went into 'response mode'. For example, there are instances where strong emotions may be felt but are suppressed. This has been described as 'deep acting' whereby emotions are regulated and aligned to those expected by Police Scotland (Grandey et al, 2007; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987):

"You have to be able to suppress sadness. Say you're delivering a death message, certainly to a family that has lost an infant, for instance, if you break down in that moment, how can you possibly give them the strength and be that support for them in their darkest hour, so you have to be able to, regardless of how hard that is, you have to be able to suppress that right down because it's your human instinct to want to comfort them and you can do that by being empathetic but I think by breaking down and showing too much emotion, I think you then can't be the support that they need at that time". P6

Participant 12 also identified similar challenges in emotion management:

"There are times you just want to cry…but you would never do that. You should never do that, because that's where that professionalism breaks down".

The requirement to suppress emotions was also evident in discussions of emotion management and dealing with suspects. In this context, the balance was between making a connection with a suspect sufficiently to elicit information and evidence and to protect themselves from violence, while suppressing feelings of anger or disgust felt by officers.

"You have to do that for, well suspects is probably your biggest one, because you need to, you cannot show any kind of rage or anger towards them, no matter what they've done. Ultimately you have got to, to get your outcome, you're ultimately getting on their side, you need to build rapport that, so you need to kind of detach yourself from what they've actually done, and try and link in with them… to get that response. So, it's more that you could be dealing with a child rapist, you're kind of treating them as a person to get an outcome, because you're wanting, a few will go on aggressive etc with them, or showing your disbelief, in what they're actually doing, you don't get the outcome that you want. So, you need to actually just, ultimately humanise yourself with them, to build up that rapport." P5.

Other officers described the need to empathise with suspects as a means to eliciting information, even when empathy is not felt by the officers. Participant 4 stated:

"I think I've empathised with suspects because it's a way of getting them to open up.

I've empathised with paedophiles, child abusers, I've seen a chink in the armour and gone for it because the baseball bat approach thing, the all guns blazing approach is not going to work, but the softly, softly, "Well, tell me about that," and, "Talk me through that," and "What about your childhood and what triggered this?" and really talking people around. Not because I really care because I don't but it's a means to an end. That might sound Machiavellian, but that's the nature of what we do. It's about getting people speaking" P4

Participant 6 also described a display of empathy or kindness to suspects to gain compliance or to get what was needed from an interview, despite not feeling this was deserved.

"You don't have to like these people but you can get what you need from them, you can get through that process by maybe, as you say, displaying empathy or displaying kindness to people when really you don't think they deserve that but and then you'll get what you need out of them, i.e. getting them to comply with a process or getting them to come compliantly like I don't want myself to get assaulted or my colleague or like so if I have to be nicer to that person so that they'll come in compliantly and I can get them into a cell, well, listen, let's just do it". P6

There is also an expectation by Police Scotland that officers manage their emotions even when exposed to repeated trauma.

6.3 COPING MECHANISMS AND STRATEGIES

Participants described a range of coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with the emotions that emanate from their work and the need to manage these emotions in the context of organisational display rules and being 'professional'. These strategies were variously viewed as helpful and unhelpful but nevertheless, essential to being able to sustain their role and move on to 'the next job'. The following discusses some of these strategies. While some may appear to be adaptive or maladaptive this division is not always distinct.

6.3.1 Tolerance

Some participants describe becoming 'numb' or 'immune' to their feelings particularly with more exposure to traumatic incidents or tasks. This may appear to be a somewhat maladaptive strategy, but for some, adapting to these experiences and feelings can be viewed as resilience:

"I also think you build up that resilience, so the more you deal with these sorts of cases, the more exposure you have. It still horrifies you, but it becomes, well this is just life, this is what people deal with, this is what people have to go through and our job is to investigate it. But the empathy never leaves you. Not with me anyway". P9

One participant described 'tolerance' of emotions:

"Oh, I mean sometimes I'll read things and think and it doesn't affect me much and you actually then stop and think about it and think god, I've just read that, that's horrendous what's happened to that person and I'm just reading it as if it's actually reading the weather forecast. So I definitely do think that you're, a tolerance, I don't know if it's a tolerance, if that's the right word but that you certainly do become numb to stories - yes because you've seen them or read them so many times that it doesn't have that shock factor. Yes, so I think there probably is that." P3

This numbness or tolerance can lead to compassion fatigue. This is discussed further in section 7.4.

6.3.2 Deferral/compartmentalisation

Some officers describe the deferral of emotions, framing this as 'putting things in boxes' or dealing with the practicalities of a task and 'thinking about it later'. For some this meant 'decompressing' by talking about their emotions with family (particularly those who are current or former police officers), talking to colleagues or clearing their mind on the journey home. This allowed them to move on to the next job. However, for some officers, 'putting things into boxes' meant not thinking about these emotions or experiences until an undefined time in the future. There was concern among participants who spoke of compartmentalisation about what happens on

retirement or if they left the job, none of whom had a solution or plan for managing motions or memories beyond employment. This suggests the need for support to decompartmentalise.

"It's in a box. I've dealt with it because I try not to dwell on things. I always have the view that, okay, we'll deal with this one today because there'll be another one tomorrow. As horrible as that is, there will be another horrible one tomorrow and try and deal with them just one at a time. I think if you start to rewind and look at the enormity of some of the things you've come across, seen, dealt with, people you've spoken to through the years, if you took it in cumulatively you would go nuts. You would go absolutely mad. We often laugh, myself and certainly more senior people in the organisation. At what point – we often ask the question, "At what point do you think all this stuff will affect you?" because you're five years down the line, sitting in a sandy beach somewhere and suddenly it all comes rushing back to you. I don't know is the answer… that means you sound like some sort of narcissist or somebody who doesn't care about anybody. It's not like that. I think it's more about separation of what's yours, what's not, what's your life and what's your work life? That separation and putting things into little compartments is what does it for me, I think." P4

Other participants also referred to compartmentalisation and their feelings about the future impact of this strategy:

"I look at how I deal with things, I probably… compartmentalise, put things into wee boxes… and then never open the boxes back up again. Two particular things that I've done, that I know that I can, if I want to, I can relive them every day in my head, and these were at times, 20 years ago, for something 15 years ago, so is that managing it? I suppose it's how I deal with it, and I would hope that that would never have a longer-term impact, but I suppose the reality is, we never know until it actually happens". P12

6.3.3 Distancing and avoidance

Some participants spoke of distancing from an incident, particularly one involving bereavement, as a useful coping strategy.

"It's somebody else's grief. It's not yours. It's okay to empathise, it's okay to sympathise but it's not your grief because it doesn't belong to you, you're there doing a job and you can't become entrenched in that". P4

Some participants referred to this as 'rationalising'. Participant 4 goes on to state:

"I purposefully don't look at the pictures of the deceased in life. I don't want to see what they look like. I don't want to see a grieving relative either. I don't want to interact with a relative because I've seen things that they would never want to see, and that's not how that person presented to me when I saw them. I don't want to know what they were like in life. Not because I'm cold about it, because there's an emotional attachment to that and if you can push that to one side, then actually, you become a bit more detracted from it." P4

Removing emotional engagement with a victim or suspect to 'depersonalise' a relationship also serves a self-protective function (Kadowaki, 2015; Schaible and Six, 2015). This is expanded on in Section 8 of this report.

Other strategies included avoidance whereby officers 'kept busy' in order to avoid ruminating on aspects of the job or particular cases that were traumatic. However, this could be problematic when an officer stopped 'being busy' either due to a change in operational demand, a change in role, absence or retirement.

6.3.4 Channelling emotions

Some participants described a coping strategy of channelling anger into energy and determination to do their best in an investigation.

"Those negative feelings drive positive behaviour. So, that sense of anger morphing into injustice, morphing into having the skills and the ability to do something about something, to make that intervention and really setting your mind to it, to bring the person to book for what they've done or hold them – or ensure they're held accountable for what they've done. It's a pretty big driving force really when you see the injustice of those who don't have a voice to speak out and you act on their behalf and again, that sounds a little bit corny but it's probably the best way to describe it. And you channel that anger, energy, disgust into something really positive to seek justice for somebody." P4

6.3.5 Alcohol

Alcohol use was also viewed by some participants as both a coping strategy and a consequence of workplace stress, recognising this in their own behaviour and that of their colleagues. It was largely acknowledged as an ineffective, counter-productive strategy, particularly when framed as addiction, although one participant stated that they got pleasure from drinking when they wanted to unwind from work. Participant 12 also reflected on the historic use of alcohol as a coping strategy.

"I remember that, you know, it used to be that we found our counsellor at the bottom of a bottle, you know, if we go back to the bad old days… if I go back to when I joined, that is what we did, we drowned our sorrows and we moved on. I'm pleased to say we've moved away from that, but can I think of any other strategy or management tool in my head that would use? Probably not, not that I could verbalise anyway".

6.3.6 Exercise and rest

Some participants used exercise as a means to manage emotions, while others cited rest as they were often exhausted on days off.

"Some people turn to drink I suppose or some people would go home and sit in a corner and cry for 20 minutes. I go for a run. I generally have a routine that, say when I finish work today, I'm going to go and run 10 miles today and just get out and just get some fresh air. And that's how I deal with things". P14

6.3.7 Drawing on resources

Participants recounted a number of resources that they drew on in order to manage their emotions and work-related stress.

6.3.7.1 Family

A common theme among many participants is that they had good personal support structures and were able to express their emotions to family, particularly if they were also police officers or were retired officers. Some participants recounted home as being 'grounding', 'real life' or a 'safe haven'.

6.3.7.2 Peer support

Some officers felt able to express emotions to 'trusted' colleagues. Some spoke of openness within teams where officers could 'vent' or talk about feelings. However, there were other participants who felt unable to speak to colleagues as there was a lack of trust about the response they would receive, where that information may be shared and the consequences for this. Much of this was dependent on individuals as well as the culture generated within teams by peers and by management. This is discussed further in Section 7.5.

6.3.7.3 Line management:

Similarly, there were mixed responses about speaking to line managers about emotional issues or support seeking. Those participants in supervisory roles generally had a positive attitude towards openness in relation to discussion of emotions or support seeking or they felt duty-bound to notice and support anyone who was struggling emotionally. They viewed themselves as open and honest and encouraged their supervisees to be the same. This was reflected in some participant's views of their own line manager and some participants stated that they would feel comfortable asking for help whether that was from a line manager or accessing the support available without a referral.

However, some officers did not feel supported by their line manager and some stated that supervisors did not always see people who were struggling. Much of this appeared to stem from an enduring stigma among police officers in relation to emotional wellbeing and support seeking. This is discussed further in Section 7.5.

6.3.7.4 Wellbeing support

It was widely acknowledged that there had been a significant increase in support available within the organisation and a recognition of the importance of 'wellness'. However, there were mixed views about seeking formal support from the organisation, with some participants feeling it was underused, ineffective, or it was viewed with suspicion or cynicism. One participant stated:

"I would say that the organisation has actually come on in leaps and bounds with support. They are really big on the wellbeing side, I've found it's all over our intranet, any absences are covered when people return to work you go through all that wellbeing as well. You'll signpost people, the organisation we now get… I think it's six sessions with a psychologist or a psychiatrist, I can't remember which one it is. But we all get that. If you go through NHS you'll be waiting months, whereas you go through the police and

actually you've got it within a matter of weeks. And actually if it's an urgent one you'll have it quicker". P2

However, another participant felt that while wellbeing was promoted by Police Scotland, its delivery was lacking.

"Being extremely honest our intranet is plastered with the word wellbeing. It's easy to write it, it's another thing to live it. It's another thing to deliver it…I just see it as a word that's banded about with a hashtag in front of it". P16

Other participants dismissed wellbeing support as ineffectual:

"On an organisational level, it fails and it fails abysmally…We talk a good game, but organisationally we are abysmal…We've a long way to go." P12

"I've been to the counselling things a couple - I think I've went for that twice; I was in and out in 10 minutes. It was almost like ticking boxes on a form, I was told I'm fine and that was it." P14

Others felt that the tools were redundant or meaningless if their line manager was ineffective:

"It's crystal clear that it does not matter what is put in place, that the organisation put in place, like we've all these fancy tools, all these things, see unless you've got a line manager who's approachable, who's willing to listen, who's willing to help and you know that they will do that for you, all that stuff's irrelevant, it really is, it's like such a tick box thing. I mean, it might help the individual but it needs the line manager to be able to, if my line manager just said oh, well go and get the Employee Assistance Programme, I though no, I'll not bother but it's if you actually with somebody that's sat down and you thought you genuinely care and they signposted you there and it felt like it was coming from a place of I'm trying to help you, you would then maybe go and do it. So, I think it would entirely come down to right now yes, I've got a line manager who I could speak to, absolutely". P3

This is discussed further in Section 7.5.

6.3.7.5 Beyond work

Some officers spoke of seeking help from organisations out with work such as men's health groups, sports clubs, internet resources for wellbeing, the NHS and counselling services.

6.4 CONSEQUENCES AND IMPACT

The negative impact of emotional labour in public protection policing on police
officers was variously articulated in interviews, with both passion and resignation.
For some participants, articulating their coping strategies was challenging and
there was also an acknowledgement that some strategies were ineffective or
unhelpful, such as 'personal internal monologues' or relying on the 'journey home'
to release anger, frustration or sadness. Over-deployment and burnout were
highlighted as commonplace, particularly among specialist roles such as Family
Liaison Officers and Sexual Offence Liaison Officers, and some expressed the
view that wellbeing tools are redundant if fundamental causes of stress such
as workload and resourcing are not addressed. This sometimes led to issues
with staff retention and consequential loss of institutional knowledge, skills and
experience within a specialised area of police work.

For other officers, the consequences of emotional labour were compassion fatigue
or as participant 16, described it, "emotion fade" and even despair.

*"There can be emotion fade as well where you've seen the same things, you see
the same struggle. You've talked about the same set of circumstances so often in
so many different children that it jades you a bit. To the fact that it's every bit as
enormous for that child today as it was the first time you encountered this in your
working life. That child's experience is no less traumatic and hurtful and perhaps
lifelong debilitating than the first child I ever read, saw, talked, dealt with however
many years ago. But there is a feeling of despair at times that it can jade you. It's
not blasé but … routines not the right word there, I'm not sure what the right word is
but that feeling is a feeling of despair. When will it get better?"* P16

Another consequence of emotion management in public protection work
was suspicion of others, often described as simply 'part of the job'. This led to
othering – a feeling that the police, particularly in public protection roles, see
things other people don't which changes them in some way, and makes them
feel and act differently to people who are not police officers (Reiner, 2010). Some
participants described the use of dark humour among colleagues as an effective
coping mechanism as it 'depersonalised' cases of extreme trauma and depravity.
However, this further distances police officers from members of the public who
may be shocked by this type of humour. Another example of how police officers
feel 'different' is personal risk management which some participants felt was
required in order to protect others from the consequences and impact of public
protection work.

This meant taking measures to protect their families including spouses and children from the trauma they were exposed to at work. For example, some participants made concerted efforts not to 'bring home' emotions from work to create a separation between home and work. However, this was not always achieved and some found 'switching off' challenging, particularly in an era where taking home a work laptop or mobile phone means this separation can be difficult to achieve. Some, as a consequence of exposure to offences against children and perceived risk, felt they had changed as a parent and became overprotective of their own children, 'policing' their behaviour more than they perceived other parents do.

In contrast, public protection policing had a positive impact on some participants, who expressed commitment and drive to continue in their role, feeling that they made a difference in people's lives, individually and in wider society, and that their job gave them satisfaction and a sense of pride. This feeling can also go some way to mitigating compassion fatigue (Foley & Massey, 2020; MacEachern et al, 2019).

6.5 ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES AND CULTURE

A number of organisational responses were identified by participants, some of which were intertwined with observations about historical changes and enduring problems in police culture.

6.5.1 Mandatory psychological support

There were mixed views as to the usefulness of mandatory psychological support. Some participants felt mandatory support should continue for all public protection officers due to the nature of their work and exposure to trauma. Some participants thought they were useful and talking to a stranger enabled them to be more honest, while others believed this to be stigmatising. Participant 12 stated:

"They were always something I went to, not least because they were mandatory…there was some point they became non-mandatory but it's something I always encouraged through my sergeants to my team."

There was also concern about confidentiality. This was summed up by Participant 20:

"I actually found it quite good… 'cause it was a stranger and you can be a wee bit more honest than going to your supervisor. Sometimes there's that worry of stigma … I do know there's maybe people that haven't [gone] because they've been worried about what that means for them. I suppose though a lot of people might be worried that the confidentiality is not there so they might not be as open and honest as what you'd like them to be."

However, other participants stated that online wellbeing assessments can be manipulated to avoid flagging concerns. Another participant suggested that anyone working in public protection who was not fit to 'empty their head' was not fit to work in their role.

6.5.2 TRiM

There were mixed views about the effectiveness of TRiM, although there was a sense of disillusionment about the process itself as well as line managers' commitment to it. This stemmed from a lack of trust in a colleague's competency and motivation to be a TRiM assessor as well as the stigma still attached to support seeking.

"They'll come through into a muster room and they'll say right, does anybody here need TRiM. Well, you're not going to stick your hand up in a muster room full of six DC's who are all very experienced and say actually, that's affected me, I can't do this. You wouldn't do that." P6

6.5.3 Wellbeing Champions

Some participants acknowledged the introduction of Wellbeing Champions, although this again was viewed with an element of distrust.

"I think it was about six years ago we introduced the wellbeing champions, so we know where to go to ask. Would I initially do that, probably not, I would probably be more likely to go on to the intranet, find out something that I can do myself, and probably look to do something outside the organisation I'll be honest with you more because I think we've always got that sneaky feeling that I was to go would they know that you've accessed it?". P15

This participant also acknowledged that colleagues had used some Wellbeing resources and had found them useful, but their own preference was to seek external support.

Support was also identified as being underpinned by individual management styles, which led to inconsistency in the provision of support. Support was felt to be reactive in response to a particularly traumatic incident or case, as perceived by supervisors, rather than proactive or part of an ongoing process of 'checking in'. Some participants also identified a difference between working in divisional PPUs and nationally based teams, the former being places where workload and stress were higher and, in some cases, where there was a feeling that support by both peers and line management was lacking.

It was widely acknowledged that there had been significant, positive organisational and cultural change in terms of attitudes and practices towards emotional expression and support seeking for wellbeing.

"I think back in the day, you would have had your best game face on, nobody would have spoken about anything, it would have been regarded as weak to show emotion, and that was the kind of culture at the time.". P4.

"I think for the most part, if I say, if I go back 20 years, if somebody came into the office crying, everyone would apply them there, you're okay, you'll be friends, we understand, you'd have walked out the office and it would have been, "What the hell was that? Who are we? Get him out of here". You know, that's what it would have been. Even if privately, we were all going, "Oh, I feel exactly the same" because you had that macho, you felt there was that, you had to maintain that." P12

"There has been a noticeable change in it, in keeping with society, I think people are more now happy to show their feelings than they would have been back in the day 30 years ago of fifteen years ago or whatever. There's no doubt about it. So, we are reflective of society, I think, and people are more open to that …" P13

"Mental health is spoken about far more positively now, so I think somebody going off with stress related illness 20 years ago would have been deemed a liability, there would have been far more negative comment about somebody that was struggling with their emotions now. I think nowadays it's far less taboo I suppose. And yes, there's probably more support there, whereas in the past it would have been, yes, you maybe would all been kind of classed as the weakest link in the team or something if you weren't coping with something like that". P14
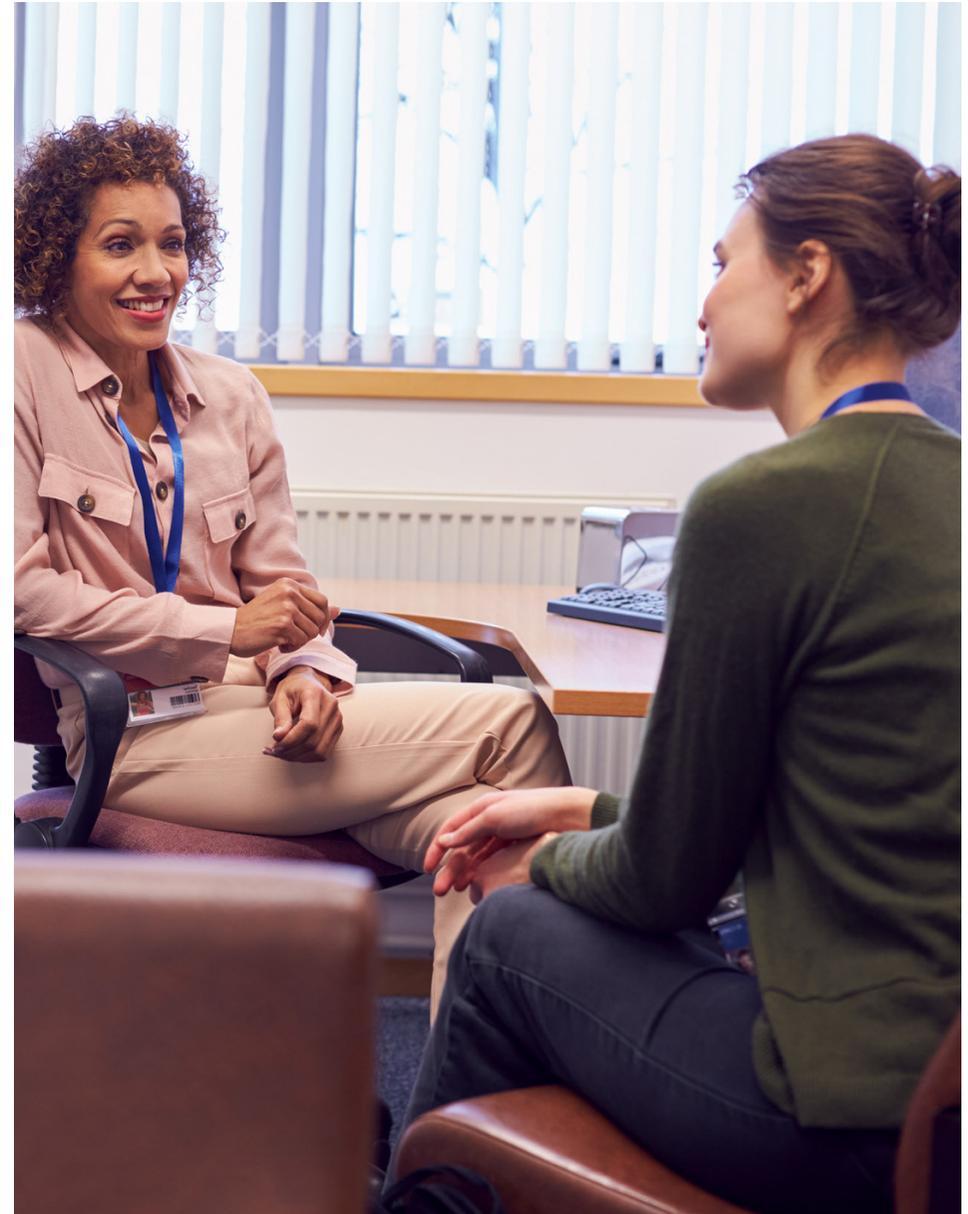
However, some participants, while acknowledging changing attitudes, still felt unable to discuss support needs:

"I think we've moved on. But I think there's still an expectation from some that you'll tough it out regardless of what we say around wellbeing and looking after people and your usual corporate party line stuff". P4

"Now, I think now we are far better than we were before, in terms of peer support. I think we're far better than we were in terms of supervisory support and the processes that are in place, but in reality, do I think that people come back and admit when they're, they need a bit of help or they need a bit of support? No, I don't think they do, not for the most part… Would I feel comfortable coming back in and going to my DS or my DI and laying my emotions out on the table? No, absolutely not, I wouldn't". P12

"…I don't think as police officers we're encouraged to talk about emotions. It's almost as if we're expected to be robots and we could go and deal with these really horrible traumatic things and then just move onto the next call as if nothing has happened." P15

Some participants felt that barriers to speaking openly about emotions and accessing support was due to persisting negative elements of police culture such as machismo, a masculinised sense of mission, and where emotions are suppressed (Bacon, 2014; Brown, 2011; Cockcroft, 2020; Hawk and Dabney, 2014; Loftus, 2010; MacEachern et al, 2019; Reiner, 2010; Walsh et al, 2013). Participant 16 stated;

*"A terrible organisation for still wanting to be too macho. We still have that culture, we still have that ethos. Much less than we did ** years ago when I joined but it's still there, it's still part of your DNA. I personally don't find it healthy, I don't think it's helpful. … It's not inadequacy, but I think we think of it as inadequacy. We think when we feel the effects of the things we see here and deal with, it's weakness and it's not. I think we've still got a bit to go with that, I think we've still got a long way to go with that to ensure that we are best supporting one another".*

Other participants spoke of an enduring culture of silence or one of 'box ticking'/'lip service' and a lack of openness and sincerity particularly among senior officers in the context of wellbeing support.

"Quite often it's the bosses who put the pressure on. They make the situation pretty much more difficult than it has to be, because they want to get their stats up, they want to look good for the politicians and get their name in the press, get that knighthood and the Queen's police medal. So quite often it feels quite empty. I think one of the things someone came up with was the … oh, a cherry blossom tree that came down and it

was basically … it was like you had to put your feelings and emotions onto this emotion tree thing. At division it was just like, come on, how about you actually try and do real change rather than something like that which … and really sounds lovely, but in practice just listen to what people are saying, or listen about their concerns about overwork, listen to the concerns about more crime, more complex crime, but less resources and less funding, less access to specialist resources. Again, SCD is paradise compared to division. So yeah I think sometimes the bosses just like to be seen to be doing stuff, rather than actually doing stuff for the right reasons". P1

"So, it's a case of, you do your job, you get on with it, and for me this whole, you have got the wellbeing, and the thing that comes up on the screensaver or comes up on this screen, total nonsense. From day one I have just been like, "Yeah, right." A lot of what I have seen is just tick-box exercises to say, 'This is what we are doing for our people.' But actually, the reality of it is actually they are not. You know, practice what you preach, because you are not doing it. And I think because we are under-resourced in PPU, we just are, so there is more expectation, and you are run ragged sometimes, particularly in those departments. It has always been like that. It was like that when I was there in 2014/2015. It is still like that. Nothing has changed". P9

Conversely, supervisors generally held the view that their supervisees were able to express their emotions and they were open to that.

Other participants didn't feel listened to or valued, and some feared if they spoke out about their wellbeing, there would be a negative consequence attached to this such as being overlooked for promotion or being forced to leave their team/role. There was still evidence of there being stigma attached to help seeking among all ranks of officers.

"Sometimes there's that worry of stigma and you go and as much as I would like to think my door's always open for my team and it has always been in the past and people have come to me with things, I do know there's maybe people that haven't because they've just been worried about what that means for them. With mental health that is always a challenge you're going to have. And it might not always be connected to the actual work, it could be how they just are with their personal life. But I've always very much try and treat people the way I'd want to be treated and I'd always… my door is always open for them". P2

"People generally don't [ask for help]. Like I said, it is a suck it up culture. People generally don't feel … it's almost like you are admitting a weakness if you ask for help, and Police Officers shouldn't be like that. We should be strong, we should be focused. That's our job. If you can't do it, why are you in the job? You know, I still think very that

culture exists regardless of what we put out there and say. I think, not across the board, don't get me wrong, there are lots of really good supervisors out there who aren't like that. I think people still feel there is this undercurrent of, "What, you can't cope?" And that is a stigma, and word will get around. There's nothing secret in this place, nothing… Because they are not able to cope with that, they can't possibly cope with Inspector or Sergeant role. It is horrible, but it's the culture." P9

"I say nobody trusts it… probably because of our own experience … our own fears that it may be seen as a weakness and reported back to management teams and supervisors. And probably our own ignorance as well, that because I think if we do, if we did use these services, we would find out that they were there to be supportive, the information wasn't fed back, but I think there's a lot of it is on us as well for not trusting it properly… If people come in and talk about stress, they will think that that's going to hinder their chances or promotion. People talk about being depressed, they will think, well that's going to be, if I'm a DC and I'm stressed and depressed when I'm only responsible for my own work, how would I be trusted to take a team? Or if I'm a DI, how would I be trusted to take a department as a DI, so I think there's still that, there's that feel of what comes next" P12.

"Not in this organisation, I would only look for that help externally. I wouldn't trust the organisation to support me. I wouldn't trust the organisation not to judge m negatively. That sense of you've displayed weakness. I've been a manager for a very long time in this organisation and 99.9% of it comes from me, what I do, what I react to. There is next to nothing there to support you. The basic benchmark is make sure they keep coming to work. So no, I've no faith in this organisation to provide any meaningful support without judgement." P16

There was also the view that 'wellbeing solutions' had come to be seen as a panacea, rather than there being a more nuanced, human understanding of the unique context of public protection policing:

"I think sometimes we run the risk of overegging it as well with this whole let's go throw wellbeing on somebody, and we're really interested in your emotions and how you feel about that. When actually, sometimes people go, "Do you know what? That was really shit, and I've dealt with it and I've pushed that to one side and I just want to move on

now. I'm going to stop flogging a dead horse." So, I think it's about striking the right balance." P4

Despite this disconnect, some participants acknowledged that cultural change was led by individuals - supervisors being open and approachable and supervisees being open to talking without fear of being judged.

"My DCI is fantastic, I can go to her with personal problems, work problems, just for a chat. She is great. She has those skills, and she actually makes me feel comfortable, and we are like friends. I respect her rank, I do what she says, but I can relate to her as well. But I think people like that are very limited from my experience in the job, really rare to find." P9

6.6 UNFINISHED BUSINESS/OUTCOMES

It was widely acknowledged among participants that unresolved cases (framed as those where there was a not guilty verdict or undetected), were frustrating. However, this frustration came from different sources. Most participants expressed some form of frustration with criminal justice processes, in particular, jury decision-making and a perceived lack of understanding of legislation and evidence by jurors and even Procurator Fiscals. Frustration was also noted by officers in cases where there was evidence or even an admission in cases of child sexual abuse but the child would not disclose. Some participants, while acknowledging that information sharing protocols had improved, described frustration at a lack of information sharing between partner agencies which meant justice for a victim was not been achieved.

"Yeah, I've been dumfounded at times where I've sat and I've been like, right, this is what we've got, two incidents in the past five years or something. And then you'll sit there and the social worker will go, well actually we've got a file this thick. And actually in it you're like, why weren't we told about this 'cause some of this you're talking about, you're talking about criminality there". P2

While most participants empathised with repeat victims of domestic abuse, some participants felt frustrated when some victims refused to provide the evidence needed for a conviction and then became a victim again.

Some participants stated that some unresolved case 'stayed with them' as they had been emotionally invested in the case and they would ruminate on what they could have done differently or whether they could have done more to bring an offender to justice or protect a victim from harm. This became a sense of personal failure.

"One I haven't got a result at court at, and it felt like you'd let the whole family down. You'd let her mother down that she never got justice. Her mother couldn't have been nicer. She was a lovely, lovely woman and she sat through all the evidence and you got that reassurance from her at the end that, "I don't think you guys could have done anymore. You went above and beyond." But walking out of the high court at the salt market straight along to Glasgow Cross and straight into a pub because you really took that – I really took that one on the chin. That was a sore one." P4

Sometimes officers were reconciled by the notion that the perpetrator would be 'caught' at a later date, while others tried to forget these cases and 'move on'.

"There is always the frustration that you do put loads and loads of it's loads of work into the case and it doesn't go anywhere. That is frustrating. But I don't personally think it ever puts you off, as such. You just think they'll come again which sadly is often the case, and I'm cited for [woman 35:11] cases that were like 15 years ago that I was a DC for that they've come and finally, there's more [work 35:20] come through and they're saying, "Right, it's going to court." You think that's very good actually" P8

7. Discussion

It is clear that Police Scotland public protection officers acknowledge the inherent stress and emotional demands of 'routine work' as identified by Daus & Brown (2014); Foley & Massey (2020); Gray & Rydon-Grange (2019); Huey & Kalyal (2017); MacEachern et al (2019); Parkes et al (2018); Roach et al (2017; 2018); Schaible & Six (2015); Sherwood et al (2019); and Williams et al (2010). They also recognize and articulate that the contradictions that arise from the complexities of public protection policing result in high degrees of emotional labour (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2016; Black & Lumsden, 2021; Huey & Kalyal, 2017).

Officers describe a range of positive and negative emotions experienced in their work, some of which can be expressed such as compassion and empathy for victims and toughness towards suspects, while others are suppressed, such as anger and frustration in order to maintain what they feel is a professional image, expected of them by the organisation and by the public they serve (Bhowmick & Mulla, 2016; Brunetto et al, 2012; Daus & Brown, 2012; Huey & Kalyal, 2017; Lennie et al, 2018; Van Gelderen, et al, 2007; Shuler and Sypher, 2008). These seem to reflect occupational norms (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) and a shared set of values and norms within public protection policing in Police Scotland. This can be conceived as both 'surface acting' (Phillips et al, 2021) and 'deep acting' (Grandey et al, 2007; Rafaeli and Sutton, 1987) on the part of officers.

Officers use a range of strategies to manage emotions and the labour required to address the conflict between organisational display rules and the emotions their work elicits. Some of these strategies are adaptive and healthy, while others may be considered maladaptive and unhealthy. However, it is clear from the findings that many officers engage in strategies that involve an element of avoidance, deferral and distancing. While some officers were able to identify a range of resources to draw on, including effective supervision and management, and peer support, officers were also critical of organisational responses that lacked nuance and were perceived to be disingenuous. They also identified a positive shift in culture and attitudes towards emotional display and emotion management, often led by good supervision, supportive colleagues and a positive team environment. However, some officers articulated a continued culture of fear around discussing emotions or support seeking and the consequences for this such as lack of promotion, or being viewed as 'weak', rooted in enduring patterns of police culture such as machismo (Bacon, 2014; Brown, 2000; Cockcroft, 2020; Hawk and Dabney, 2014; Loftus, 2010; MacEachern et al, 2018;

Reiner, 2010; Walsh et al, 2013). Poor emotion management, particularly when engaged in both 'surface acting' and 'deep acting', has been acknowledged as leading to poor performance as well as a range of negative impacts and consequences for police officers (Bakker and Heuven, 2006; Barkworth and Murphy, 2015; Chapman, 2009; Hawk and Dabney, 2014; Huey & Kalyal, 2017; Lennie et al, 2020; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Phillips et al, 2021; Van Gelderen et al, 2011). However, it is important to acknowledge that emotional labour is not necessarily harmful and that effective emotion management can lead to personal wellbeing, job efficacy and satisfaction, (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Bhowmick and Mull, 2016; Conrad and Witte, 1994; Harris, 2002; Wharton, 1998; Wharton and Erikson, 1993).

Given that public protection policing is emotionally demanding, it needs resilient individuals at every rank. Having reflected on these findings and the data as a whole, we propose a conceptualisation of factors that may promote resilience in this emotionally demanding context, whereby demand may be mitigated by 12 'Rs' which are both individually and organisationally dependent. These may have utility and application to other areas of policing and emotionally demanding roles in other professions. The 12 Rs illustrated below suggest that officers can persevere and manage public protection work. Some of these may be emotion management skills an officer may need to develop themselves, some may be ways of being and managing emotions that officers have developed before joining the police, or a public protection unit, and others many need to be facilitated by, or provided directly through organisational practices either practically or culturally. Each of the 12 Rs are overlapping and interdependent so 'failure' in one may undermine the others.

Each of the 12 Rs is described below:

7.1 RESILIENCE:

This sits at the heart of this model. It is the ability to manage one's emotions in order to meet the day to day demands of the role, as well as maintain a personal sense of wellbeing and fulfilment. This may mean the capacity to suppress emotions at the time, but then allowing the space to process them later. It allows an individual to make meaning of their experiences and feelings and allow emotions to be expressed, controlled and managed, without locking them away indefinitely. Resilience means being able to address emotions and move on from them with a clear sense of what belongs to an individual and what belongs to someone else. It requires wellbeing services that are safe, accessible and meaningful, allowing space for individuals to sit with and process emotions. Drawing on our data, we suggest in this context that resilience is multifaceted, and relies upon strategies or traits of an individual, as well as the culture, processes and provision of the organisation.

7.2 RESIST:

This refers to a mechanism by which individuals may resist the material to which they are exposed, and the associated emotions it evokes. Resistance may take many forms, including avoidance, suppression, distancing and compartmentalisation among others, but the overall effect for officers is resist the emotion and its potential effects. For many these emotions may be processed later, through conversations with peers, or through supervision for example, ensuring emotions do not become locked away or problematic which is counterproductive, but capacity to resist the emotions while engaging in the work was an important part of resilience for many.

7.3 RESOURCES:

Resources are a key aspect of resilience and refer to both organisational resources, and personal resources. This means having what is required to undertake your role including sufficient staffing and personnel, time and operational support, for example, and also personal resources to help manage emotions such as coping strategies, access to sufficient leisure, or someone to talk to (within the organisation or outside of it) and mechanisms to distract from or support the processing of emotions.

7.4 RESPONSE:

For individuals to be resilient they need an optimal response from the organisation in which they work. This may take the form of immediate response after a distressing experience or difficult deployment, from both line managers and peers, but also ongoing proactive response to officer wellbeing and support, for example through external supervision and internal organisational processes that are able to respond to officers' needs.

7.5 REST:

Sufficient rest is required for resilience. This includes time off, but also how an individual uses that time off. For example, doing things that encourage rest. This is very individual – for some sport or time spent with family may provide rest, while for others these may not. Rest also includes sufficient time for physical and emotional space after deployment, capacity to take annual leave or time off in lieu if required and careful monitoring and management of overtime.

7.6 RELIEF:

Resilience can be achieved when individuals receive a sense of relief from their work, temporarily or in the medium and long term. This includes being relieved of the burden of work and emotions through time off, taking space after difficult interviews, limited deployment to consecutive traumatic incidents for example, or relief from certain tasks in the short term. This also requires an organisational culture where taking time away is normalised a vital for wellbeing rather than an inability to cope. This can only be achieved with adequate resources in PPUs.

7.7 REPAIR:

This refers to the need for the organisation to support repair of any damage when it occurs, for example when the cumulative effects of exposure to traumatic material take their toll, or where employees feel let down or unsupported. If, for example, there has been a failure of wellbeing services to provide adequate support, or where it has been ineffective, taking steps to repair the psychological contract between an employee and the organisation is vital. Repair can also be conceptualised as self-repair, where officers are given the time and space not just to rest (see above) but for activities that are reparative too.

7.8 RECOVER:

Linked to rest and repair, recovery is also essential for resilience. This can include the provision of formal settings for recovery such as police treatment centres, and effective, formalised wellbeing support and supervision that is meaningful to and valued by those who use it. It also means not being over-deployed or re-deployed after a difficult case without allowance for self-recovery including time and space to talk to empathic colleagues without judgement or fear. Space for recovery is predicated on the acceptance that some officers will experience ill-effects of working with continued exposure to traumatic material, and a culture that acknowledged and accepts harm when it does occur is necessary to allow for recovery.

7.9 RECOGNITION:

Recognition of the demands of public protection policing, and its value, both internally and externally is an important aspect of resilience. If officers feel their role and contribution is valued and recognised, it brings with it a sense of satisfaction and pride, that can support resilience in the role. This includes a recognition of the significant risks that public protection officers often hold – risk to the victim, to the officer themselves, to their family and to Police Scotland, especially in terms of reputational damage). This extends beyond an annual My Career discussion and requires an organisational culture that communicates recognition formally and informally. Recognition can also come from the officer themselves in terms of their own sense of achievement and pride in their work.

7.10 RESPECT:

Resilience can also be supported through respect for the work public protection officers to, the emotional labour and demand, and the risks held. Related to but distinct from recognition, respect speaks to esteem and how this is communicated and supported within the police force. Historically some public protection roles have not been seen as 'real police work' (see above) and promoting respect for the specialist skill the role demands can increase esteem within police forces. Respect can also be embedded in the organisational wellbeing response, with credible wellbeing staff who respect and know the job and recognise and acknowledge the impact of this form of policing and context.

7.11 REWARD:

Receiving reward for work is an important aspect of resilience, and rewards can be extrinsic such as receiving good pay and benefits including salary, pension, and other financial returns such as discount schemes (SPRA, Blue Light cards, for example). Reward can also be intrinsic such as being able to feel pride in your work and its significance, and being able to make sense of a 'good outcome' such as a criminal justice outcome or feeling that you have made a difference in someone's life. This could be that a person has felt listened to or believed or that you have been able to make that person safe. It would also mean feeling that you have done the best you can in a given circumstance.

7.12 REFLECT

Resilience can also be promoted through effective reflection on an individual's own position, their emotions, what is theirs and what is someone else's (a suspect's, a victim's, a colleague's for example), and on their own emotion management, including the outcome of working within an emotionally demanding and risky context, such as hypervigilance. Professional reflection can allow for insight and understanding that is not immediately available at the time of an incident or experience. This process can be supported through external supervision as well as promoting individuals' capacity for self-reflection.

7.13 REGULATE

Resilience also requires the capacity for individuals to be able to regulate their own emotions and affective responses. This may mean suppressing emotions in the moment, and compartmentalising until such time they can be brought to awareness and processed, or it may be regulating feelings of anxiety or fear borne of the level of risk held in any given situation.

8. Conclusion

Officers in the study describe a range of emotions experienced in their work, including joy, achievement, satisfaction, pride in their work, camaraderie, anger, disbelief, sadness, frustration and empathy, some of which can be expressed, while others are suppressed in order to maintain what they feel is a professional image, and that they perceive is expected of them by the organisation and by the public they serve. Officers use a range of strategies to manage emotions and the labour required to address the conflict between organisational display rules and the emotions their work elicits. Some of these strategies are adaptive, while others may be problematic longer term. It is clear from the findings that many officers engage in strategies that involve an element of avoidance, deferral and distancing.

While some officers were able to identify a range of resources to draw on, including effective supervision and management, and peer support, officers were also critical of some organisational responses they felt lacked nuance and were perceived to be disingenuous. Some officers identified a positive shift in culture and attitudes towards emotional display and emotion management, often led by good supervision, supportive colleagues and a positive team environment. However, some officers articulated a continued culture of fear around discussing emotions or support seeking and the consequences for this such as lack of promotion, or being viewed as 'weak', rooted in enduring patterns of police culture.

Given that public protection policing is emotionally demanding, it needs resilient individuals at every rank. Having reflected on the findings and experience of the officers involved in the study, we identified 12 factors that officers identified as promoting good emotional wellbeing in this context. We have conceptualised these as the 12 Rs and they offer a potential framework for mapping and understanding the factors that contribute to resilience within this context: Resist; Resources; Response; Rest; Relief; Repair; Recover; Recognition; Respect; Reward; Reflect and Regulate. Some of these Rs are individual, in that they represent characteristics or strategies of individual officers, and some are structural, as they reflect either culture or practice of the organisation, and some are mediated by each other. This conceptualisation may have utility and application to other areas of policing and emotionally demanding roles in other professions. We will continue to develop these findings and the conceptual typology of the 12Rs for publication in academic journals.

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