



Police Scotland Youth Volunteers

INTERIM REPORT (2024) FINDINGS



Institute for
Public Safety
Crime and Justice

The IPSCJ is a **premier research, evaluation and consultancy organisation** situated in the fields of **public safety, crime and justice**.

Being situated at the interface between **practice, policy and academia**, the IPSCJ has delivered insight and innovation to enhance **public service delivery models, organisational strategy and service user outcomes**.

We collaborate with partner organisations at **local, regional, national, and international** scales to address **key global challenges** of the 21st century.

The core mission of the IPSCJ is to support positive evidence-based policy and practice change for the benefit of society. The IPSCJ has five portfolios:



About the Evaluation

In November 2023, all PSYV groups were invited to a national survey and **248** of you took part (approximately a third of all PSYVs).

The survey collected data on the following aspects-

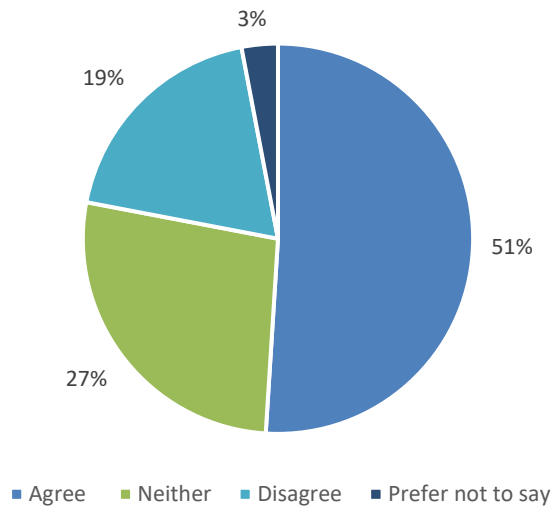
- Motivations of young people for becoming a PSYV.
- Young volunteer experiences as a PSYV.
- What they have gained from the experience.
- What can be improved.
- Their perceptions of the police and those of young people more broadly.
- The impact they feel that PSYV has on their communities.
- Demographic information.



Experiences of being a PSYV

Overall, the programme is viewed positively by the volunteers, with high percentages of volunteers feeling a **sense of belonging, that they can be themselves, and they have friends they can talk to at PSYV.**

Is there room for improvement in how the PSYV programme is run?



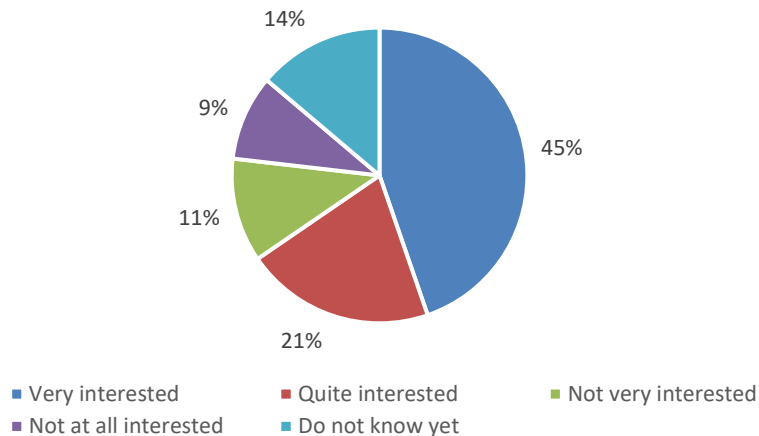
51% of you believe that there is **room for improvement** on how the programme is run, although, most respondents had no suggestions on how the PSYV experience can be improved.

We will explore further the areas which you feel could be improved in future surveys and case studies as this research is ongoing research.

Most of those who have joined PSYV are interested in a **police career** when they are older and so have joined PSYV to gain more insight into the police role and experience.

76% agreed with 'I feel that I have a say and influence over the content and direction of PSYV' yet 8% disagreed and 14% selected 'neither agree nor disagree'.

Are you interested in joining the police when you are older?



It is recommended that a youth voice strategy be developed, establishing mechanisms for young people to consistently have a voice and say into how the programme is run and their participation in different activities.

To ensure continued police involvement - It is recommended that the National PSYV team review how they raise awareness of PSYV within Police Scotland as well as consider the inputs from different policing teams into the programme.

Opinions on Activities and Events



- ✓ Team Building (30)
- ✓ Learning about the Police (21)
- ✓ Games (20)
- ✓ Drill (18)
- ✓ Group tasks (18)
- ✓ Talks (18)

- ↓ None (72)
- ↓ Drill (29)
- ↓ Talks and Presentations (14)
- ↓ Physical Activities (7)



The volunteers' responses demonstrate the **diversity in individuals' likes and dislikes** of certain activities, as some enjoyed drill, whilst others asked for less drill, suggesting it is **best to provide a varied array of activities** to keep volunteers engaged.

We have recommended that adult staff and volunteers are provided regular training sessions on programme content and group management so they can feel even more supported and confident in their role.

You enjoyed a diverse range of local events, regularly listed were **leaflet drops, fireworks and sporting events** and most of you stated you had enjoyed all the local events or campaigns you had attended.

When asked what suggestions you had for PSYV's involvement in events, some responded there **should always be duties or roles** for the volunteers and clarity of what these roles entail beforehand.

It is recommended that for all events, a standard practice be developed with PSYVs input which outlines the nature of the activity, roles and responsibilities for PSYVs as well as benefits of the activities for different participants (e.g. PSYVs, Community).

The most popular National Event was overwhelmingly Edinburgh Tattoo, however there were some **perceived imbalances in group opportunities for national events**.

It is recommended that a national audit is undertaken to assess the participation of groups with events and campaigns.

Skills, Benefits and Challenges

Skills, Benefits and Challenges

- In terms of what you think you gain from PSYV, many discussed growth in **confidence, developing communication skills and being able to mix or talk with new people and the public.**
- Another common theme referred to the positive social aspects of PSYV such as **belonging to a family and getting to interact with and help people in their community.**
- When asked if there was anything you found challenging about being a PSYV, 106 youth volunteers did not write an answer and a further 61 responded they felt **no challenges.**
- Of the remaining respondents, the most common challenges raised included **engaging with new people, managing time, perceptions or reactions of their peers to them volunteering with the police and talking in front of people.**

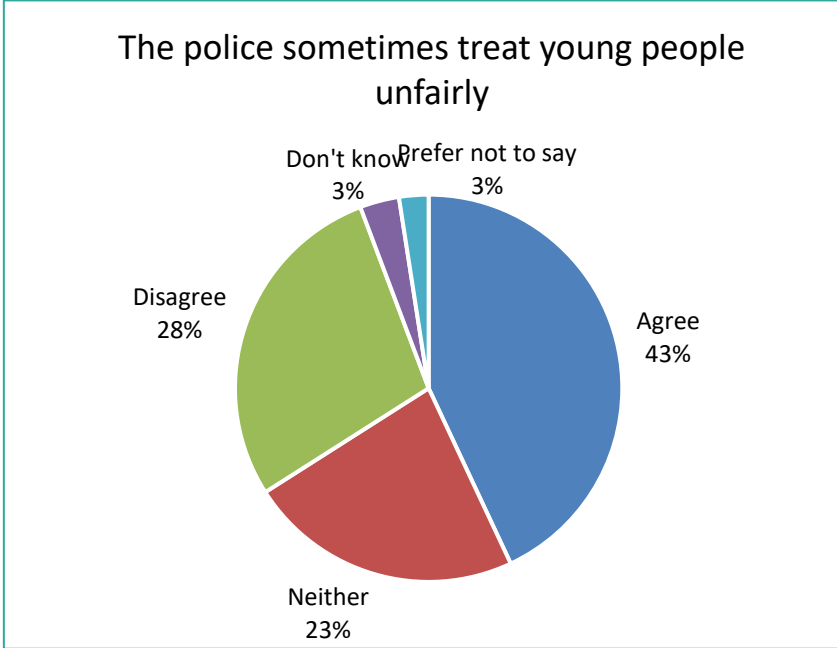
“Able to give back to my community, and I gain a family”.

“Some people don’t like the police therefore don’t like us.”

Perceptions of the Police

- Over 60% of you felt **‘to a great extent’** that Police Scotland upholds the values of **Integrity, Fairness, Respect** and **Human Rights**.
- Most respondents said they would feel comfortable approaching the police and confident reporting a crime.
- When asked whether you feel like the police sometimes treat young people unfairly, **43% agreed** of which **21% strongly agreed**.

“I think it makes you understand how the police feel and work and humanises police officers”.



- 63% of you responded that PSYV made your **perception of the police more positive**.
- Some youth volunteers stated that interacting with police officers in PSYV has allowed them to **see a different side to the police than what is presented in the media**.

Some Feedback From Other Surveys

The National Online Survey with Adult Staff and Volunteers

- We received 61 responses, and the survey will be repeated in the future to continue to find out more information.
- Most of the sample stated they enjoy their role in PSYV, they are making a positive contribution to the lives of young people and their role is rewarding.
- It was regularly stated that they would like to receive updated training for lesson plans, ideas, and teaching materials.
- Some believed that PSYV does not have enough interaction with the police.

"I enjoy and feel rewarded by encouraging and providing mentorship to young people. I particularly enjoy seeing those who are quiet and shy develop through their journey with PSYV".



Alumni Survey

The Alumni survey is ongoing, so far, we have received 26 responses.

"Helped me establish strengths within myself which altered the trajectory of my career"

"My experience here will always help me, the transferrable life skills I gained here were essential to my success as an individual."

"PSYV gave me confidence in myself. It also taught me skills to interact with the public at such a young age"

What's Next?

The reports and findings have been communicated to the Police Scotland steering group which we report to, and the aim is that these findings will be made available to everybody to consider/take on board.

Case Studies

We hope to meet many of you when we visit in Scotland to conduct case studies with different groups. These will involve focus groups and creative methods to find out more of your opinions first hand.

Future Surveys

There will be more surveys coming out to find out more about your experiences at PSYV. Please continue to fill them out as your feedback is very insightful and will help improve PSYV!

Thank you

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The police sometimes treat young people unfairly

