

Exploring the experiences of women in security and identifying key areas for industry development

A report for ICTS UK & Ireland

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Section 1. Executive Summary

Overview

The focus of this report is on understanding why women are underrepresented in the security industry and what is needed to address this. The research sought to understand what barriers are presented both in terms of aspects of the industry that may be off putting to women and also any discrimination that they may face. Further, it sought to understand what is and could be done to address these barriers. This report is based on 706 survey responses and 21 interviews with female security professionals from a range of roles who carry out or manage staff who undertake physical security tasks.

In summary, the report highlights that many women hold a positive perception of the security industry overall, and by no means have all struggled to progress or faced discrimination. However, our research has shown that it is apparent that a number of potential barriers to women entering and progressing in this sector still exist and as such, there is a clear need for the industry to address these. It was apparent that many of the proposed approaches suggested by the women who took part in the research, would be of general benefit to the industry, not only by attracting and retaining female security personnel, but by helping to dispel outdated perceptions of what physical security work involves and create a working environment that is attractive to all and enables all staff to be treated equally. There is little desire among women to be handed advantages, rather to be treated fairly.

Quantitative findings

Perception of the security industry

- 69% of respondents had a positive experience of working in the security sector with only 6% having explicitly negative experiences. These were due to gender discrimination; sexism, bullying; lack of support compared to male colleagues; absence of opportunities for promotion and less pay.
- 69% said their attitude to security had changed since joining the sector, 48% in a positive way, stating that they found the work more interesting and professional than they had originally thought. 21% had changed negatively, primarily due to gender discrimination and working conditions. More favourable impressions were noted from women in senior roles, even though some also experienced discrimination.

Characteristics of the security industry

- 85% of respondents felt that the security industry is male-centered.
- 56% of respondents viewed their pay as comparatively low.
- 48% felt that most security roles are not permanent.
- Contracted staff perceived their pay and working conditions to be less favourable overall compared to men, than those employed in-house.

Promotion and advancement

- 59% of respondents reported that they had advanced in their career since entering the security sector.
- While 41% felt that men and women in their workplace were equally likely to be promoted, 44% felt women were less likely to be and only 3% said women were more likely to be promoted than men.

Balancing work with family life

- 44% thought security work is not compatible with family life.
- 38% of those indicating they are a parent/caregiver felt that working in the security sector creates more conflict between work and parental/caregiver responsibilities, than working in other industries/sectors. But nearly as many (35%) thought it was the same.

Experiences in the security industry

- When asked whether their experiences in the security sector was affected by their gender, 66% felt that they had to prove their capabilities, compared to male colleagues who they regarded were automatically viewed as capable.
- 59% indicated their experience of security is that it is an “old boys club” and 50% felt they did not have good female role models to learn from.
- 47% said they had received less respect from peers than male colleagues and 44% said that colleagues treat them differently because they are female.
- Only 35% agreed that being a woman in security gave them an advantage and slightly more disagreed (36%).
- 70% disagreed that they lack confidence in their capabilities and 67% disagreed that they find the physical requirements of working in security a challenge.

Experiences of abuse

- 64% of respondents had experienced one or more of the types of abuse explored by the survey from male colleagues or the public, while working in a security role. This included bullying (50%); sexual harassment (47%) and violence (24%).
- Those who reported experiencing this were less likely to be positive about different aspects of security work compared with those that did not indicate they had experienced these types of abuse.

Approaches to overcoming barriers

- In terms of recognised practices aiding women to potentially overcome barriers in the security industry, overall experience of these was low, but they were generally perceived to be effective.
- 59% of respondents had come across flexible working hours, with 80% suggesting they are an effective approach.
- 35% of respondents indicated experience of mentorship programmes, with 84% viewing them as effective.
- Only 16% were aware of talks or information highlighting security as a career option for women.

Qualitative findings

Key issues for women in security

While not intended to be an exhaustive list of all issues women face in security, a number of issues were particularly prominent in responses:

- Whilst it is acknowledged that the issues faced by women are not distinct to the security industry, but rather reflect broader societal issues about the role of gender in the workplace, generally those who had been employed in other industry sectors, suggested that security is behind in terms of gender equality.
- Numerous and recent examples were noted where women had been treated differently to men, including incidents of sexual harassment and sexist behaviour against them. Stereotypes that women at meetings should take notes or make drinks were also flagged.
- Some women also felt that they had to work harder than their male colleagues to prove themselves and earn respect. Opportunities to progress were seen by some as less than for men and there were examples of women feeling overlooked for promotion. Some felt disadvantaged by being allocated easier, safer and less challenging tasks, thereby reducing their likelihood of gaining the experience needed to progress.
- Many respondents highlighted the barriers presented by the nature of security work, such as shift patterns and long hours. These were particularly problematic for those with parental and caregiving responsibilities, since respondents highlighted they are still more likely than males to undertake these responsibilities. Although these realities of security work were accepted, respondents suggested that more could be done to overcome these, such as adopting flexible working patterns and arrangements.
- Some respondents noted the importance of being strong, confident and making themselves heard. Some highlighted that they did not need to exhibit stereotypical 'masculine' traits (such as physical strength) to be successful and mentioned other skills and attributes which they regarded as advantageous (such as communication skills). But some observed instances where women felt they had to modify their behaviour to fit in with men to be accepted.
- On the whole, respondents perceived there to be a lack of effective action when issues of discrimination were reported and some examples were noted where this had resulted in further disadvantage to the individual who reported discriminatory behaviour. Overall, there appears to be a lack of real commitment by management to effectively tackle discriminatory behaviour.

Action needed to overcome barriers

Again while not intended to be an exhaustive list, there were a number of ways in which it was felt change was needed that were particularly prominent in the responses:

- Respondents reflected that security is still seen as a relatively unskilled profession with the requirement of just physical strength. These outdated perceptions need to change and security work needs to be promoted as a professional career, with differing roles, requiring a diverse set of skills and offering a range of rewards. It was suggested that this will encourage women to see a career in security as attractive and challenge the views of those who think women do not belong.
- Respondents noted the need for a change in the culture within organisations so that attitudes and beliefs that disadvantage women in security are challenged and eliminated. Efforts to train all staff (including senior managers) on expected and appropriate behaviour, were suggested, along with introducing more robust procedures for dealing effectively with reports of discrimination that overcome the criticisms of existing procedures.
- Respondents noted the importance of promoting security as a career to young people, not least to demonstrate to young women that careers in security are suitable and rewarding. Related to this was a perceived need for visible female role models in the industry, highlighting their successes, to help show that security careers are not just for men.
- The importance of recruitment practices was noted. This included: a need to move towards language, imagery and descriptions that send a far clearer message that roles are not just for men; addressing factors that may automatically exclude applications from women (such as requiring a military background and looking more favourably on time out of employment which may be due to parental/caregiver responsibilities); and adopting practices (such as blind CVs) to overcome potential bias when shortlisting.
- It was suggested that there is a need to clarify the processes and requirements to progress within the security industry and provide flexible career options to encourage women to enter and progress.
- As noted above, the nature of security work in terms of shift patterns and long hours was a significant issue and it was suggested that more could be done to offer different shift types (such as split shifts and shorter shifts) and more flexible working arrangements.
- The greater need for support from management was highlighted, and particularly the importance of mentoring. The value of good support was in its ability to help women identify their strengths, provide encouragement and help women to build confidence in their own abilities. While the need for female role models and mentors was highlighted, respondents also acknowledged the importance that male champions play in encouraging women to progress.
- Respondents reflected on actions they had taken to overcome barriers and carve out their own success. They noted the importance of setting goals, getting noticed, developing themselves, and building confidence in their abilities and having confidence to acknowledge and take credit for their successes and ultimately be able to sell their strengths to secure promotions. The importance of networking was also noted.

Section 2. Introduction

Aims & Objectives

- 2.1 It has long been observed that women are underrepresented in the security sector. Yet there are many potential advantages to having a greater proportion of women at all levels, albeit this area is under-researched. Previous research has identified a number of barriers to women entering security work and similarly to progressing in it, as well as possible approaches to overcome the barriers. However, little is known about whether these are being adopted. Perpetuity Research was commissioned by ICTS UK & Ireland to address this gap in knowledge and better inform a future approach. It should be stressed that this is not to suggest that other genders are not important too. They are of course, and indeed the final section discusses this in a little more depth. Nor is the study designed to provide a guide to practice, that would necessitate a very different study. Rather it seeks to better understand the perspectives of one group, women, working in different areas of security. It is presented as a study on which others may build.

The structure of the report

- 2.2 Section 3 provides a review of the relevant documentation to identify the key barriers to women in this industry with designated ways of overcoming these. This draws on security specific knowledge, as well as insights generated by more diverse business environments. Section 4 details the survey findings and following that, the qualitative data from the survey and interviews is analysed and presented in Section 5. The final section (section 6) consists of a discussion of the key findings. The methodology, which details limitations of the research and the generalisability of using the findings, can be found in Appendix 1.

Section 3. Evidence Review

- 3.1 The growing participation of women in the workforce has not excluded the security sector and at times this role has been prominent. As an example, during World War II women accounted for 75% of the Bletchley Park workforce, albeit their work (somewhat characteristically) – which included codebreaking - received less credit than was the case for their male peers.¹ After the war, traditional male dominance in the work pool returned and a higher representation of women was slow to advance. Gradually a variety of influences led to a greater role for women including: the general trend for more women to enter the workforce, alongside instruments for mandating equality and rights for all²; a wider perception of the different ways women could contribute in security³; the emergence of various security representative/membership associations and groups (which at various points championed the cause of women)⁴; the emergence of female leaders⁵, setting examples of what can be achieved⁶; and a focus on specific initiatives to encourage women into different aspects of security work,⁷ while also increasing career opportunities.⁸
- 3.2 Yet, security work has long been viewed as something mostly men did even being called the “good ole boys club”.⁹ In the UK 10% of SIA license holders (the system for ensuring private security operatives are properly trained and qualified) are women¹⁰; indeed, more generally women are thought to represent about 10% of the workforce in the industry¹¹, although it is acknowledged that this can vary quite widely (both lower and higher) - depending on the type of organisation¹², the role¹³, and type of security¹⁴ the figure can be above 20%.

¹ Gibbett, L. 2016. Raising the Profile of Women in Security. Available Online: <https://securityintelligence.com/raising-the-profile-of-women-in-security/>

² Khelaia, N. 2012. Assessment of Women's Role in the Security Sector of Georgia. Available Online: <http://pasos.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/nino-khelaiaPASOS.pdf>

³ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*

⁴ Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. Women in Security: Changing the Narrative. Available from: <https://www.securityinfowatch.com/security-executives/article/12245408/women-in-security-changing-the-narrative>

⁵ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*; Gibbett, L. 2016. Raising the Profile of Women in Security. Available Online: <https://securityintelligence.com/raising-the-profile-of-women-in-security>

⁶ Gibbett, L. 2016. *Op cit.*

⁷ Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.*

⁸ Oliver Wyman. 2014. Women in Financial Services. Available Online: https://30percentclub.org/assets/uploads/UK/Research/OW-Women-in-Financial-Services-04_12_14_FINAL-v3.pdf

⁹ Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.*

¹⁰ SIA 2019 figures on license holders in the UK indicate that 10% are female <https://www.sia.homeoffice.gov.uk>

¹¹ Suby, M. 2015. Women in Security: Wisely Positioned for the Future of InfoSec. Available from: <https://iamcybersafe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2015-Women-In-Security-Study.pdf>; Gibbett, L. 2016. *Op cit.*

¹² Dale, A. 2013. 2013. Why is the private security sector lagging behind on gender equality? Available Online: <https://www.uniglobalunion.org/news/why-private-security-sector-lagging-behind-gender-equality> - suggests that in some large global private security companies women represent 20% of the security guard force, in regional and domestic companies they are approximately 10%.

¹³ Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.* – suggest although not exclusive to security companies, in S&P 500 companies women represent 4.4% of the CEO positions.

- 3.3 While this implies some improvement in the representation of women in the security industry, the literature suggests that many issues remain. These include barriers to women's participation within the sector and also for advancement.

Overview of Barriers

- 3.4 The dominance of men in the security sector and in senior positions within it¹⁵ has a number of implications for women including: the lack of role models (and even where there are female ones there are concerns that they are not necessarily good for some women in that they replicate men's behaviour¹⁶); the lack of mentors and potentially greater difficulties in networking (since internal and external networking can often take place in more traditionally male-dominated venues such as pubs or sports events);¹⁷ and the lack of gendered leadership programmes.¹⁸
- 3.5 Less women in senior roles translates to less women participating in decision-making, thereby, a lack of consideration of women's perspectives and interests.¹⁹ With posts being created to attract male professionals over females,²⁰ this results in inequality in security institutions:

*...women in security institutions are assigned positions which are confined to the service sector, such as: supplies, medical care, administration, cleaning and so on.*²¹

*You cannot be what you cannot see...Companies should promote their women in security to author white papers, speak on conference panels, and speak at K-12, colleges, and universities.*²²

- 3.6 It has also been argued that workplaces in the security sector, in general, can be unattractive and even hostile to women, after all, they regularly involve dealing directly with conflict, especially at the lower

¹⁴ Department of Labor, 2014. Nontraditional Occupations. Available from: <https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/Nontraditional%20Occupations.pdf> - suggests 7.5% of security and fire alarm installers, 18% of information security analysts and 23% of people working in the security guard sector were women.

¹⁵ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*

¹⁶ In part because they are viewed to have poor work-life balance, travelling often and working late. See, White. 2012. The big issues for women in the finance industry: our experts said. Available Online: <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/women-diversity-finance>

¹⁷ Security Magazine. 2017. The 5 Biggest Barriers Faced by Women in Tech. Available Online: <https://www.securitymagazine.com/articles/87878-the-5-biggest-barriers-faced-by-women-in-tech>; Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

¹⁸ Security Magazine. 2017. *Op cit.*

¹⁹ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*

²⁰ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op Cit.*

²¹ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*

²² Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.*

levels. Unsurprisingly then, security can present a less attractive career to women than men.²³

- 3.7 The gender gap in pay and conditions does not exclude the security industry either.²⁴ Because women still bear disproportionate responsibility for families²⁵ the realities of working in the security sector with long and sometimes irregular hours, lack of return to work programmes, and failure to offer flexible working arrangements can disproportionately impact women.²⁶
- 3.8 Perceptions and stereotypes play an impactful role in the workplace. Historically, those employed in the security industry were often male ex-military or ex-police²⁷ and this can adversely impact on how these jobs are viewed. For example, there is a perception that security work is unsafe and an unfit environment for women to be employed in.²⁸ In a different way, the significantly higher number of male employees may give women the perception of risking of sexual harassment or violence in the workplace and therefore dissuade them from ever considering security work.²⁹ Whereas some may perceive their rights may be harder to ensure.³⁰ As a result, those women who do enter the industry, risk being stereotyped as “a certain kind of woman” for holding a “male” job,³¹ and not given the same level of respect as men.³² As President and CEO of Illuminar Inc. Eddie Reynolds (quoted in Hinton and Friedman 2016) explains:

*Women have to prove themselves first where men, in my opinion, are automatically perceived as the experts who know what they are doing and what they are talking about.*³³

- 3.9 Such perceptions and stereotypes can also impact the way in which women self-identify. There is some literature highlighting women’s experience of imposter syndrome in the security industry: “where even highly talented individuals are beset with a persistent inner fear that they do not belong at the decision table.”³⁴ Such beliefs are reinforced

²³ Oliver Wyman. 2016. Women in Financial Services. Available Online:

<http://www.mmc.com/content/dam/mmc-web/Files/Women%20In%20Financial%20Services%202016.pdf>

²⁴ Gibbett, L. 2016. *Op cit.*; Security Magazine. 2017. *Op cit.*

²⁵ Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

²⁶ Inclusive Security and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. 2017. Module Eight: Supporting Women Working within Security Sector Institutions. Available Online: https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/Women's%20Guide%20Curriculum/InclusiveSecurity_Curriculum_Series_SSR_MOD8.pdf

²⁷ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*

²⁸ Bastick, M. and Whitman, T. 2013. A Women’s Guide to Security Sector Reform. Available from: <https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/WGTSSR-Web.pdf>. *Op cit.*; Inclusive Security and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. 2017. *Op cit.*

²⁹ Inclusive Security and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. 2017. *Op cit.*

³⁰ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*; Gibbett, L. 2016. *Op cit.*

³¹ Khelaia, N. 2012. *Op cit.*

³² Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.*; Bastick, M. and Whitman, T. 2013. *Op cit.*

³³ Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.*

³⁴ CRDFGlobal. 2017. Breaking Barriers: Women in Nuclear Security. Available from: <https://www.crdglobal.org/news/breaking-barriers-women-nuclear-security>

by employment patterns that systemically fail to include women in decision-making.³⁵

Mechanisms to Overcome Barriers

- 3.10 Previous work on this issue has focused on various remedies and mentoring is a case in point here, especially when help takes the form of learning how mentors have themselves overcome barriers.³⁶ Former chief of Merrill Lynch, Sallie Krawcheck (quoted in Hinton and Friedman, 2016) refers to mentorship programmes as the “*unspoken secret to success*.”³⁷
- 3.11 The value of mentoring has been highlighted³⁸ especially when run alongside a formal women’s leadership development programme. Some have called for women-only programmes thereby enabling women to be more candid when sharing their experiences. Others have suggested more family friendly practices,³⁹ with flexible workplace schedules enabling women to better meet both their home and work demands⁴⁰ more effectively and efficiently.⁴¹ Programmes that support returnees are also considered crucial:⁴²

*A talented woman may have left her job...to raise her children. When her children begin school a few years later, she may be keen to resume her career. Yet the prospect of returning to the workforce after five years away can be daunting. Very few job descriptions do not specify that recent experience in a particular field is required.*⁴³

- 3.12 Of course, there are overlaps between removing barriers to women entering security and those of other disadvantaged groups. Some key pointers discussed in the literature include:
- Making diversity a task for senior management, not just specialist departments such as Human Resources⁴⁴
 - Setting up an Executive Committee talent strategy to spear-head greater diversity⁴⁵
 - Putting in place dedicated funding and staffing for gender issues (e.g. an equality unit)⁴⁶
 - Making a public commitment to gender equality⁴⁷

³⁵ CRDFGlobal. 2017. *Op cit.*

³⁶ White. 2012. *Op cit.*

³⁷ Hinton, T., and Friedman, K. 2016. *Op cit.*

³⁸ White. 2012. *Op cit.*

³⁹ Inclusive Security and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. 2017. *Op cit.*

⁴⁰ CRDFGlobal. 2017. *Op cit.*

⁴¹ Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁴² Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁴³ Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁴⁴ Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁴⁵ Oliver Wyman. 2016. *Op cit.*

⁴⁶ Bastick, M. 2014. Integrating Gender into Oversight of the Security Sector by Ombuds Institutions & National Human Rights Institutions. Available Online:

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/118327?download=true>

⁴⁷ Bastick, M. 2014. *Op cit.*

- Developing a code of conduct, policies, and procedures that reflects gender equality⁴⁸
- Engaging in strategic planning with specialised gender institutions and women’s non-governmental organisations⁴⁹
- Encourage men and women to take parental leave⁵⁰
- Amplifying women’s voices in decision making (i.e. specifically including these voices)⁵¹
- Addressing the promotion and pay gap⁵²
- The development of hiring methods that reach professional women’s audiences (e.g. via women’s professional associations)⁵³
- Providing regular (mandatory) staff training on gender issues⁵⁴
- Streamlining the process for reporting, investigating, and responding to sexual harassment, discrimination, and gender-related issues (e.g. confidential reporting system, anonymous reporting, protective measures for the person who reports, clear statement that all complaints are taken seriously, conduct site visits and inspections, allow complaints to be submitted by witnesses or third parties like partners and other staff)⁵⁵
- Using gender-sensitive language and perspectives in all annual reporting practices (e.g. avoid using gendered pronouns to refer to the collective). Assess the methodology by which women’s views were collected and what challenges this may present.
- Disaggregating the opinions of men and women, where relevant (e.g. women reported that ..., men reported that ...). Report on sexual harassment, discrimination, and gender-related issues.
- Using images and case studies with both males and females.⁵⁶
- Only attend or speak at conferences and events that include female panelists and speakers.⁵⁷

3.13 While these examples are illustrative, the importance of measuring progress against any approaches introduced has been highlighted. Oliver Wyman (2014) lists the following examples of measures and metrics that could be used:

- *% ExCo [Executive Committee] and Board members that are women*
- *% promotions to one and two levels below ExCo that are women, or % increase in representation of women at these levels*
- *Ensure all short-lists for key positions include at least x credible female candidates*

⁴⁸ Bastick, M. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁴⁹ Bastick, M. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁵⁰ Oliver Wyman. 2016. *Op cit.*

⁵¹ CRDFGlobal. 2017. *Op cit.*

⁵² Oliver Wyman. 2016. *Op cit.*

⁵³ CRDFGlobal. 2017. *Op cit.*

⁵⁴ Bastick, M. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁵⁵ Bastick, M. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁵⁶ Bastick, M. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁵⁷ CRDFGlobal. 2017. *Op cit.*

- % of staff on “high flyer” or “fast track” programs that are women
- Ensure all ExCo members mentor and sponsor at least one high potential woman (with criteria in place to ensure that the mentoring and sponsorship is of sufficient quality and frequency)
- Increase retention rates for female staff at mid and senior management levels by x%
- % managers who have completed unconscious bias training⁵⁸

3.14 Ultimately, not all barriers exist in all companies and not all of the above-mentioned mechanisms will be feasible in every company or indeed every country. What is key, however, is to recognise the relevant barriers, decide on an action strategy, communicate this clearly across the company, and measure progress: “*The solutions are not difficult. What is needed is action.*”⁵⁹

3.15 Tables summarising the barriers to entry and advancement that women may experience and the mechanisms identified for overcoming them are included in Appendix 2 - Additional Tables.

Summary

3.16 Review of the existing literature highlights that there are a number of potential barriers in existence, but also and crucially, a number of mechanisms that can be adopted to overcome them. The key question these insights raise is whether these approaches are actually being used in the security industry and whether they are effective. That question, along with a wider examination of the experiences of women in security, is the subject of the next section.

⁵⁸ Oliver Wyman. 2014. *Op cit.*

⁵⁹ Dale, A. 2013. *Op cit.*

Section 4. Quantitative findings

Background

- 4.1 The survey focused on women who carry out security tasks themselves or manage staff who carry out such tasks. The research focused on physical security (as opposed to cyber) and was promoted via various channels, especially security associations and security press. There were 706 responses.⁶⁰
- 4.2 The survey was mainly composed of statements with which respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Additionally, some questions invited open text responses (for the most part open text responses are considered in Section 5 – Qualitative Findings).
- 4.3 The findings below are organised by 8 main topics:
- Respondent characteristics
 - Overall perception of the security industry
 - Characteristics of the security industry
 - Promotion and advancement
 - Experiences of parents/caregivers
 - Experiences in the security industry
 - Experiences of abuse
 - Approaches to overcoming barriers
- 4.4 In addition to the frequency responses to questions, analysis was undertaken to compare whether views differed by specific characteristics/sub-groups of respondents. Only issues that were statistically significant, evidencing a relationship between the variables (i.e. not occurring by chance), are included. While some key points are integrated into the main findings, more detailed consideration of how experiences differ are included in a number of sub-sections that follow the main analysis (see Differing Experiences by Characteristics – para 4.57 onwards). These include:
- By type of employment
 - By role
 - By length of time working in security
 - By experience of abuse
 - By overall view of the industry

⁶⁰ While the focus of the survey was on the views of females, males could leave their contact details to receive a copy of the report. Of the non-male respondents the vast majority identified as 'female'. 2 respondents identified as an 'other' gender type and their responses are included.

Respondent characteristics

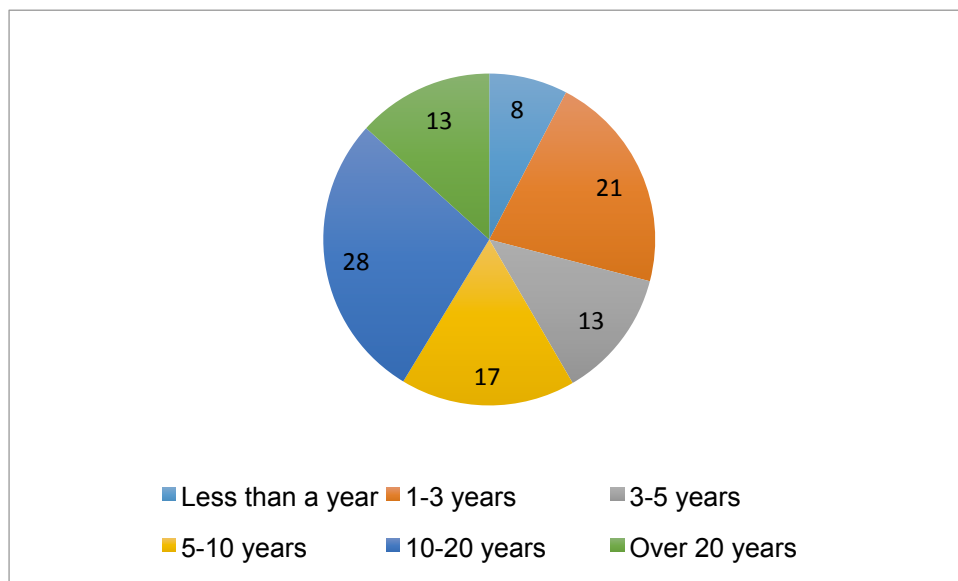
- 4.5 Overall, there was a good representation of different types of respondents in terms of the country they work, the level of their role, length of time working in the security sector and pathways into it.
- 4.6 Respondents were asked in which country they most frequently conduct their work. In total 39 countries were represented. The greatest number of responses were from those working in the UK (54%, n=379) followed by the United States (9%, n=63), Canada (7%, n=49), and Belgium (7%, n=48). The full list of respondents by country can be found in Appendix 2 – Additional Tables (Table 5).
- 4.7 Respondents were also asked to indicate which of a number of role types best described the level of their current role. Close to half (47%, n=329) had a management role of some description and a third (34%, n=240) were at security officer level. Table 1 provides the full breakdown by role.

Table 1. Level of respondents' role (n=706)

Role	Description	%	N
Security Officer	An operational role such as a guard, door supervisor, CCTV operator etc.	34%	240
Security Supervisor	A role involving supervision of security staff	10%	69
Security investigator	A role investigating company risks and losses	2%	15
Security Manager	A role that leads on delivering the security requirements of an organisation or site and managing the security staff	18%	130
Area Manager	A role that oversees delivery/performance of security at a number of separate sites or for a number of contracts	7%	46
Operations Director	A role that oversees delivery/performance of security nationwide	7%	47
Company Director		5%	37
Security Consultant	A security specialist providing expertise to clients for specific pieces of work such as assessing vulnerabilities or need and designing solutions	10%	68
Another level of security work	<i>Respondents were asked to state</i>	8%	54

- 4.8 Half of the respondents (51%, n=358) were contracted (i.e. employed by a security company and contracted to work for one or more organisations). Just over two-fifths (43%, n=301) were in-house (i.e. employed directly by an organisation such as a bank, university, hospital etc.). A very small proportion (1%, n=8) were agency staff (i.e. employed via an agency and typically deployed to cover duties such as staff sickness and holidays)⁶¹.
- 4.9 In total, two-fifths (41%, n=286) had worked in the security sector for 10 years or more. Three-fifths (59%, n=406) had done so for less than 10 years. Figure 1 depicts the full breakdown of length of experience in security.

Figure 1. Length of time working in the security sector (n=692) %



- 4.10 As expected, those working at 'security officer' level tended to have been working in the industry for a shorter time than those working at a higher level.
- 4.11 The pathways into their current roles in the security sector varied among respondents. Most commonly, respondents had secured their roles through their own initiative (35%, n=246). A fifth (20%, n=141) had received an internal promotion and another fifth (20%, n=138) had responded to an advert. Close to a fifth (19%, n=131) highlighted that they got their current job via personal recommendation and a tenth (10%, n=72) highlighted family and/or social links as their pathway. Less common pathways included: a recruitment agency (5%, n=35), a recruitment agency specific to the security industry (2%, n=15), a job centre/unemployment office (2%, n=12), training received as part of a redundancy packet (1%, n=4), and a specialist scheme for the unemployed to get back to work (0%, n=2). Other pathways (5%, n=38)

⁶¹ The remaining 5% of respondents (n=33) indicated that they were unsure.

included: starting their own business and being headhunted (e.g. via LinkedIn).

Overall perception of the security industry

- 4.12 Reflecting on their overall experience working in the security sector, in total over two-thirds (69%, n=367) had a positive experience; only 6% (n=43) a negative experience, leaving a quarter who had a neutral experience (25%, n=177).
- 4.13 In terms of the characteristics of those who were positive about their overall experience, a greater proportion of these worked at a higher level (76% or more) than those working at 'security officer' level (63%) or 'security supervisor' level (57%). Similarly, those who had worked in the industry for the longest (over 20 years) more commonly had a positive view (77%) than those who had worked in the industry for less than a year (60%).
- 4.14 Those who indicated they had suffered a negative experience, were asked to clarify their response, the majority of which (n=40) did so. It should be borne in mind that this is based on relatively small numbers. Nonetheless, of those who had a negative experience, two-thirds gave an explanation attributing it to issues relating to gender discrimination, less than a fifth indicated other issues about the industry (such as working hours, lack of professionalism), and less than a tenth referred to both gender discrimination and other issues about the industry. For the remaining tenth, it was unclear whether the issues raised related to gender or not⁶².
- 4.15 Those who flagged that gender discrimination was the reason, or part of the reason, for their negative experience most commonly referred to the environment as male-dominated, where sexism is institutionalised and women do not receive the same support nor respect as their male counterparts. This was perceived to lead to a lack of opportunities for advancement, as well as women having to work harder to earn what recognition they did receive. This inequality was perceived to be compounded by the gender pay gap and perceptions and stereotypes around what jobs within the industry entail and what characteristics female employees embody. There was also the sense that even if male colleagues were aware of the issues faced by women little was being done to improve the situation, and what was being done was largely just for show. A few respondents also mentioned the prevalence of bullying and other abusive behaviour. Illustrative quotes include:

'Unfortunately, security is usually viewed as an area which men - rather than women, work in; therefore, it is immensely difficult to be respected and listened to.'

(Survey respondent)

⁶² For example respondents made statements such as 'lack of training or advancement opportunities'. It was unclear whether this was perceived to be gender related.

'It is exhausting trying to overcome the ingrained sexist attitudes of clients and colleagues.'

(Survey respondent)

'I have good managers but I still see women being criticised for their leadership and taking initiative when otherwise men would be praised; I still get surprised looks when they learn that I'm paid better than they thought and often I find myself thinking that I have to put myself in a man's shoes to pitch an idea.'

(Survey respondent)

'It's more difficult for women to get a job because we seem to be less intimidating to others when on protection duty. Our height and stature are not as bulky as males, so we are seen as not strong enough physically to be able to protect as effectively as a male colleague.'

(Survey respondent)

'Just 10% of my colleagues [men] support women in security, the rest of 90% are against and they make the work difficult.'

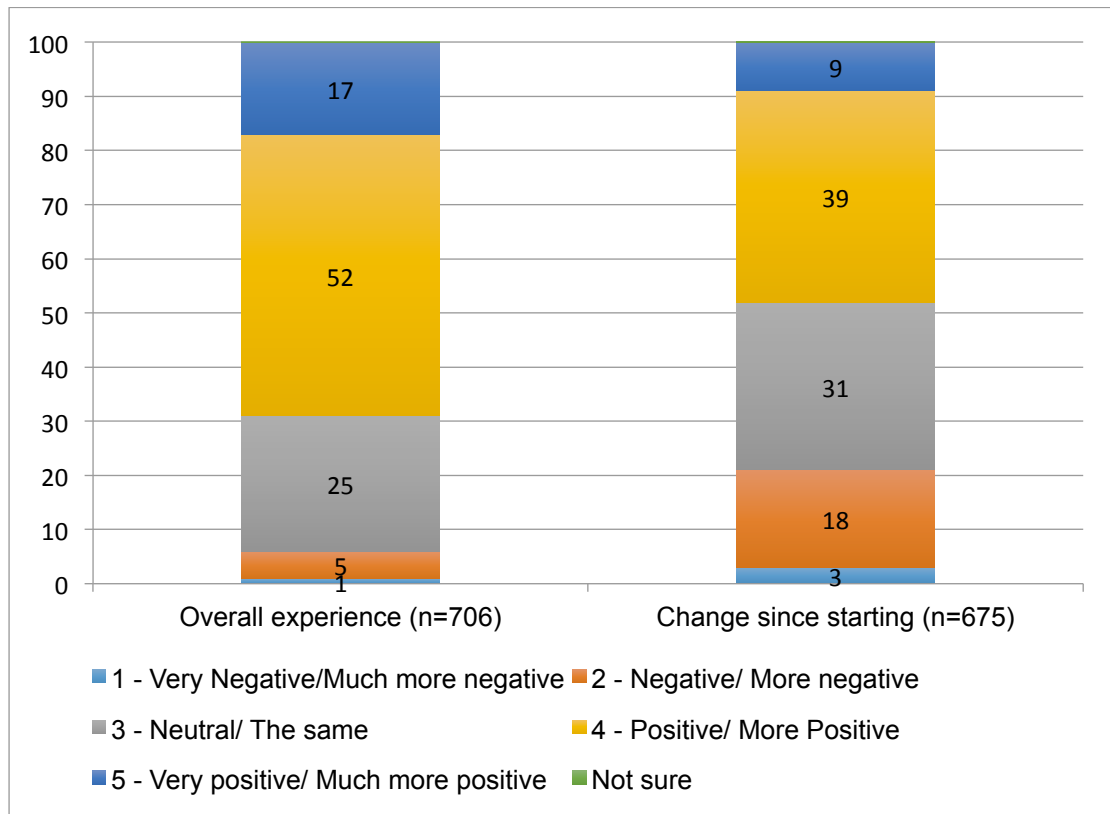
(Survey respondent)

'Security Departments are primarily headed by men who will speak to gender equality and proper treatment of employees, but mostly pay lip service to those.'

(Survey respondent)

- 4.16 Interestingly, over two-thirds of the respondents (69%, n=464) indicated that their perception of the security industry had changed since they first entered it. Nearly half of the respondents (48%, n=322) indicated that they now had a more positive view, while a fifth (21%, n=142) indicated that they now had a more negative view. Figure 2 displays the results.

Figure 2: Overall perception of the industry and change in perception %



4.17 In terms of the characteristics of those who were more positive about the industry than when they first started, a greater proportion of those working at a higher level were now more positive (between 50% to 67%) than those working at ‘security officer’ level (39%) and ‘security supervisor’ level (35%). Interestingly, in-house respondents (working directly for an organisation such as a bank, university etc.) were a little more likely to now be more positive than when starting out (54%) than contracted respondents (employed by a security company) (45%).

4.18 For those who indicated their perception was more positive now than when they started the most common reason given (by close to two-fifths of those who responded) was that they now have a greater understanding of the realities of the sector. This manifested in a number of different ways. For example, some found the work to be more interesting and varied than their original perception of what security work involved; and some felt they had benefited from lots of different opportunities to learn more about security. Others had expected to come across negative experiences such as violence or sexism, but found in reality that these were less commonplace than their original expectations. Similarly, some had expected to encounter low levels of professionalism and low standards, but found the opposite to be true. Some illustrative quotes include:

‘You learn why security do the things they do and the sacrifices they make.’

(Survey respondent)

'The job is more important than what I thought. I thought you were just stood around.'

(Survey respondent)

'The content is more interesting and challenging than expected.'

(Survey respondent)

'Much more enjoyable than I first thought, good wages, good opportunities and love the work.'

(Survey respondent)

'I have grown to see more opportunities within the industry which is exciting.'

(Survey respondent)

'Much less violent than first perceived.'

(Survey respondent)

'I expected to experience sexism from male colleagues, however I personally never experienced it.'

(Survey respondent)

'Before I didn't know the sector was so professional and well organised.'

(Survey respondent)

'I now see the enormous amount of work behind the scenes and the highly skilled specialists delivering security and safety to thousands of contracts around the country. When you don't know security, you only see front-facing staff, who aren't always the pinnacle of perfection. It really depends where you go, who you meet and the level of engagement you have. The public only see what the public experience, not the huge amount of knowledge, action and movement below the surface of the water.'

(Survey respondent)

- 4.19 For over a sixth of the respondents that were now more positive about the industry, this was due to changes that they had seen within security. Examples were given of how the use of technology and the significance of cyber security is providing new opportunities and challenges, and how the industry was thought to be moving away from leadership by an 'old boys club' and towards professionals with more diverse backgrounds and skills. The nature of security itself was also noted to be changing towards more relationship and customer focus, with greater attention on supporting the achievement of business goals and being proactive, rather than reactive. There was also some suggestion that security is being taken more seriously now, not least due to terrorist incidents and threats. Illustrative examples include:

'The technology has changed offering continued growth and new challenges.'

(Survey respondent)

'Security sector is very dynamic. One needs to adapt himself or herself to cope with technological advancements. It is a learning field.'

(Survey respondent)

'The older generation of traditional security leaders is retiring and making way for new thinking and leadership in the profession.'

(Survey respondent)

'It is not just about guns, guards and gates. Its really about risk management and being proactive in planning rather than reactive.'

(Survey respondent)

'I believe views have become better due to the restrictions on who can become security with background checks etc, not any random person can do it.'

(Survey respondent)

'The security industry has changed its focus to be more strategic and help accomplish business goals.'

(Survey respondent)

'With terrorism being high risk, security has become more important.'

(Survey respondent)

- 4.20 Close to a sixth of respondents indicated that their perception had improved on the basis that they were now seeing more women in the industry. This included seeing more female role models and because generally women are becoming more recognised, valued and respected within the industry:

'The additional skills women can bring to the industry are better recognised and valued.'

(Survey respondent)

'It has taken many years, but more women are being promoted and recognised for their work.'

(Survey respondent)

'Because woman has proven that she is professional and responsible, and she has won men and clients recognition.'

(Survey respondent)

'There has been more exposure to women in management and women with credible expertise.'

(Survey respondent)

'More female management and leadership roles.'

(Survey respondent)

'I see a lot more women in this sector now, and we are finally being recognised for our critical thinking and communications skills.'

(Survey respondent)

'More women working within the industry than when I first started.'

(Survey respondent)

'I see more women in managerial roles.'

(Survey respondent)

'I have seen in myself, and the female colleagues and external partners that I have had the pleasure of working with, that the glass ceiling certainly exists, but can also be shattered.'

(Survey respondent)

4.21 Other reasons why respondents were now more positive (each highlighted by few respondents) included better training and opportunities; a better work culture; more support for staff; and increasing diversity.

4.22 For those who indicated their perception was more negative now than when they started in the industry, the most common reason given (by close to a third of those who responded) was related to gender discrimination. This included general observations about sexism in the industry, as well as personal experiences of discrimination. A number of issues were mentioned, including work being geared towards males; disrespectful behaviour towards women by male colleagues; lack of support and opportunities for women to advance. For example:

'Females don't get the same opportunities as men.'

(Survey respondent)

'Uniforms are designed for males.'

(Survey respondent)

'I got promoted and I've had to stand down due to male officers being unresponsive or jealous.'

(Survey respondent)

'I have lost three job opportunities because I am a woman.'

(Survey respondent)

'I found that it is difficult to get anywhere unless you are male.'

(Survey respondent)

'As a female in security, male counterparts often interrupt or try to take over when responding.'

(Survey respondent)

'Clients stating [that] they do not want female security operatives and the companies accepting this.'

(Survey respondent)

4.23 Close to a fifth of respondents indicated their perception of security had worsened due to contractual arrangements in respect of low wages, unsatisfactory hours (either long hours or lack of work hours) and poor work life balance, for example:

‘Wages are lower now compared to the cost of living, this line of work has no work/life balance, you are expected to work at a moment’s notice and for long hours with no regard for your health or family life.’

(Survey respondent)

‘The level of threat has risen in 10 years. But the wages do not match the urgency in having security due to current threats.’

(Survey respondent)

‘When I mentioned my concerns about the lack of hours on my interview, I was assured I’d get more hours. I wasn’t told I’d need to come in on my days off to achieve this. So, this work isn’t synonymous to family life.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Low pay, long hours, unhealthy shift patterns, tight budgets which affect quality causes high turnover of staff & frustration.’

(Survey respondent)

‘The owners of the firms make all the profit and it seems as though those working for them earn £10 an hour and the firms earn £8 per hour per shift of every person they put in a job.’

(Survey respondent)

- 4.24 Other factors (each highlighted by few respondents) included poor management; lack of opportunities for security officers to progress; a lack of respect towards security professionals by the public and clients; concerns about safety and the dangers of the role; that work can be dull; and a lack of value of security and specifically of security officers by clients.

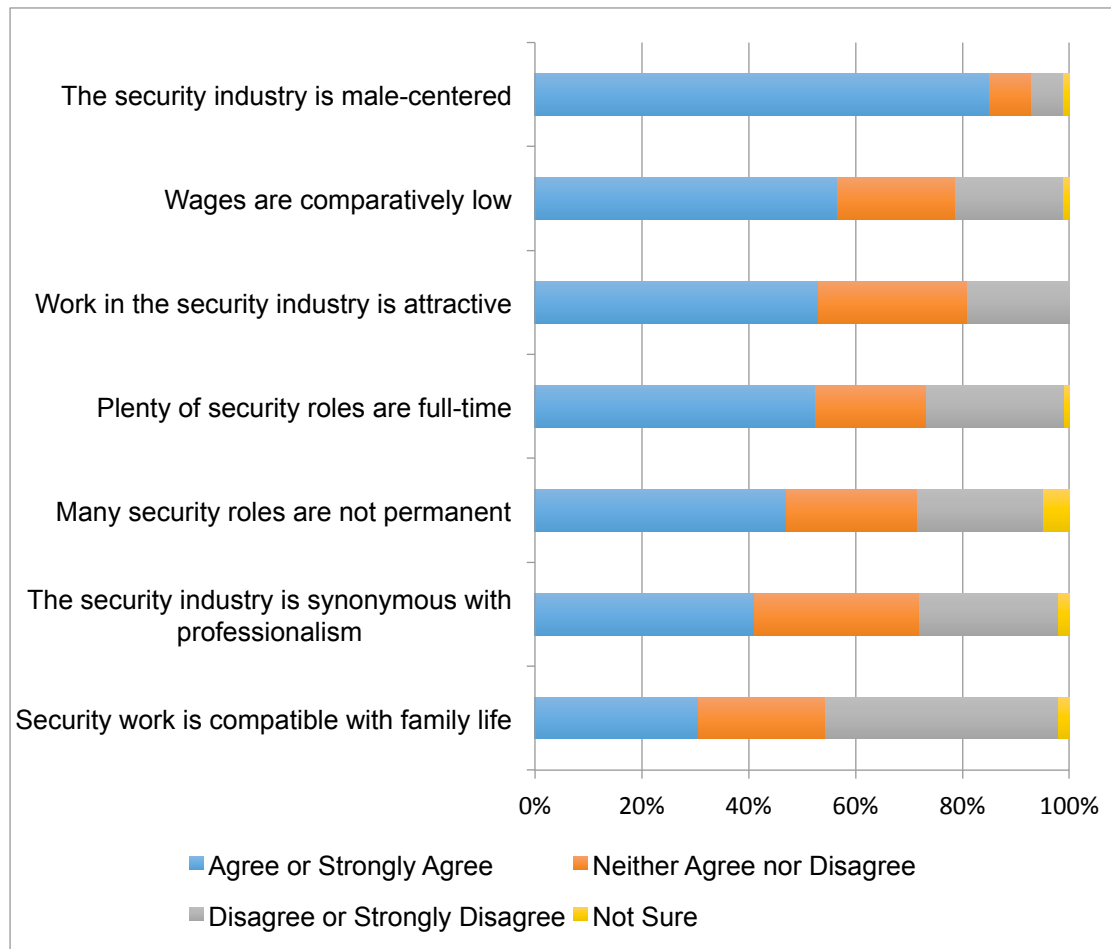
Characteristics of the security industry

- 4.25 Respondents indicated their level of agreement with some characteristics of the security sector that the literature suggests may make it off-putting as a career option.
- 4.26 By some margin, agreement was highest with the statement that the security industry is male centered – over four-fifths held this view (85%, n=572). Respondents were equally likely to hold this view regardless of their length of time in security or the level of their role.
- 4.27 Around half of the respondents agreed that wages are comparatively low (56%, n=378) and that many security roles are not permanent (48%, n=321). More than two-fifths (44%, n=294) disagreed with the notion that security work is compatible with family life (close to a third agreed – 31%, n=206).
- 4.28 Some characteristics appeared to be less of a concern – a quarter (26%, n=177) of the respondents disagreed that the security industry is

synonymous with professionalism (i.e. viewed the industry as unprofessional). And, although security roles have been criticised for not offering enough hours, only a quarter (26%, n=173) disagreed with the suggestion that plenty of security roles are full-time. Less than a fifth (19%, n=129) of the respondents disagreed that work in the security industry is attractive (i.e. thought it is unattractive).

4.29 Figure 3 displays the full results.

Figure 3. Perception of characteristics of the security industry (n=670-673)

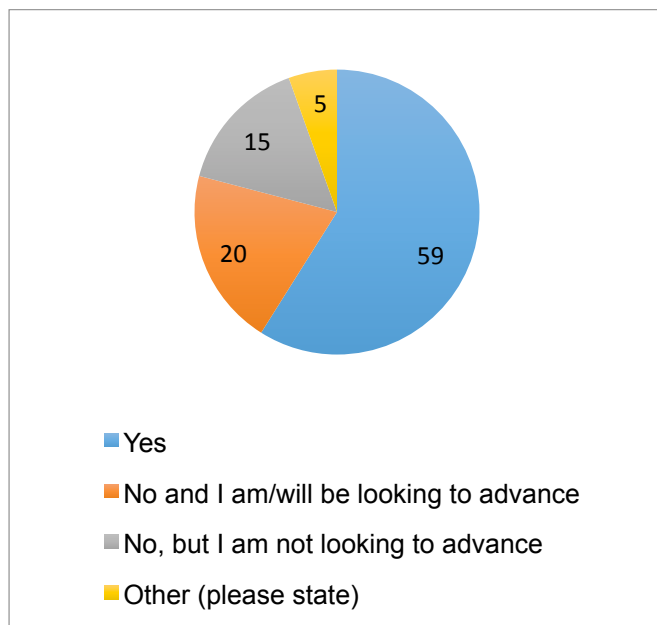


Promotion and advancement

4.30 Close to three-fifths (59%, n=386) of the respondents reported that they had advanced in their career since entering the security sector. The third that had not (35%, n=233) were fairly evenly split between those that were (n=132) and were not (n=101) looking to advance. Unsurprisingly respondents at 'security officer' level had less commonly experienced promotion (31% had advanced) than those working at a higher level (which varied between 68% and 95%). Similarly, there was a direct correlation between promotion and the length of time in the security industry (15% of those in the industry for less than a year had advanced increasing up to 90% of those in the industry for over 20 years).

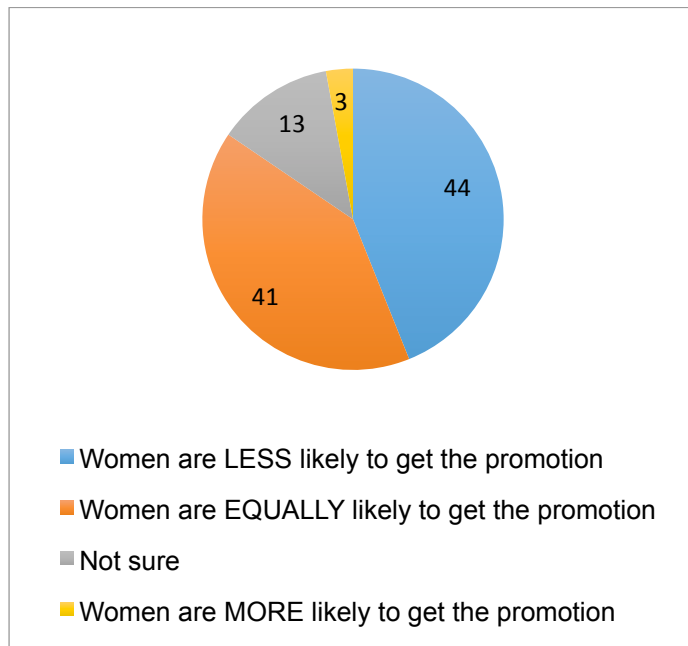
4.31 Those who indicated 'other' (n=36) in relation to whether they had advanced in their role, provided a wide range of reflections on this such as: experienced having advanced to a certain level but struggling to advance any further; having to change organisation in order to advance; having advanced, but far slower than experience and ability should have afforded; being held back in their current role because managers want/need them in that position; having advanced in terms of responsibilities but not receiving the recognition or pay that should be attributed. Figure 4 displays the results.

Figure 4. Experience of career advancement (n=655) %



4.32 In terms of whether there is inequality among men and women in securing promotion, the most common response at just over two-fifths (44%, n=289) was that if both men and women were equally qualified and experienced, it was less likely that women would get promoted. However nearly as many (41%, n=267) felt that women are equally likely to get the promotion. The results are displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Perception of likelihood of promotion (n=658) %

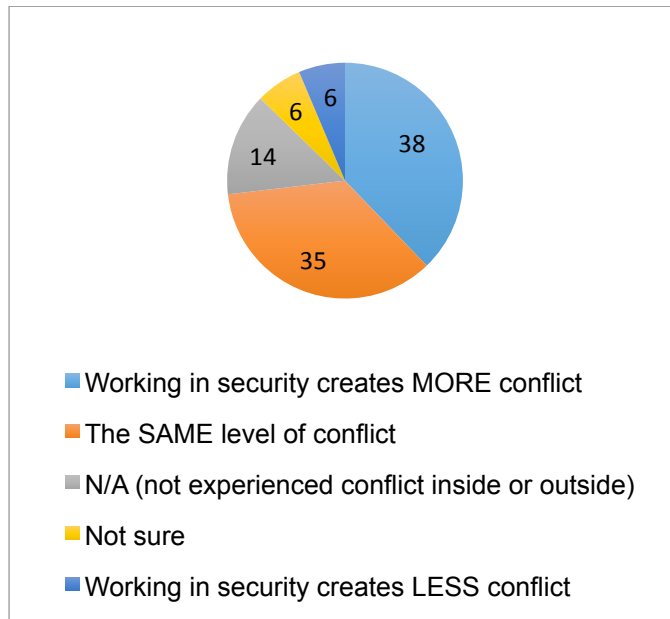


Experiences of parents/caregivers

- 4.33 Of those who provided an answer to the question⁶³ just under half (45%, n=286) indicated they previously or currently take on parenting or other types of caregiver roles. Perhaps unsurprisingly this was more common among those who had been in the industry for longer (27% of those in the industry less than a year rising to 61% of those in the industry over 20 years).
- 4.34 Of these respondents, close to two-fifths (38%, n=107) felt that working in the security sector creates more conflict between work responsibilities and parental/caregiver responsibilities than working in other industries/sectors. However almost as many (35%, n=100) believed it creates the same level of conflict. The breakdown is shown in Figure 6.

⁶³ 22 respondents indicated 'prefer not to say'.

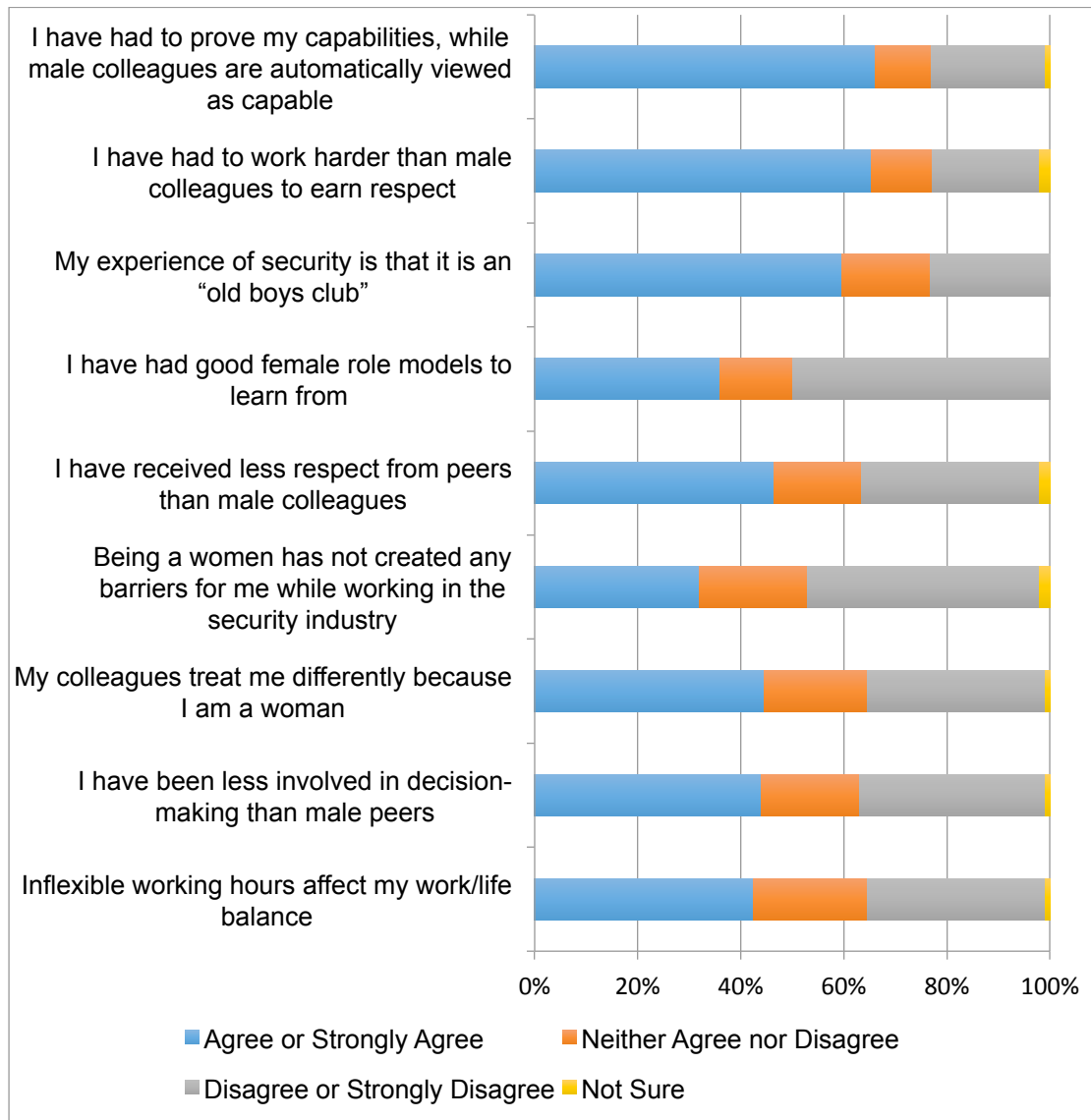
Figure 6: Level of conflict between work and parental/caregiver responsibilities compared with outside the security industry (n=283) %



Experiences in the security industry

- 4.35 Respondents were presented with a number of statements designed to measure if they feel their experiences within security are affected by their gender.
- 4.36 There were a number of statements where responses showed the industry in a negative light in relation to gender. Two thirds reflected that they had to prove their capabilities, while male colleagues are automatically viewed as capable (66%, n=416); and that they had had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect (e.g. from clients, peers, management, competitors and the public) (66%, n=415). Three-fifths indicated their experience of security is that it is an “old boys club” (59%, n=374); and half disagreed that they had good female role models to learn from (50%, n=312).
- 4.37 Close to half of the respondents indicated they had received less respect from peers than male colleagues had (47%, n=297); and disagreed that being a woman had not created any barriers for them while working in the security industry (45%, n=283).
- 4.38 Over two-fifths indicated that their colleagues treat them differently because they are female (44%, n=277); that they have been less involved in decision-making than male peers (44%, n=277); and that inflexible working hours affected their work/life balance (42%, n=264).
- 4.39 Figure 7 displays these results.

Figure 7: Experiences affected by gender – negative scores (n=627-630) %

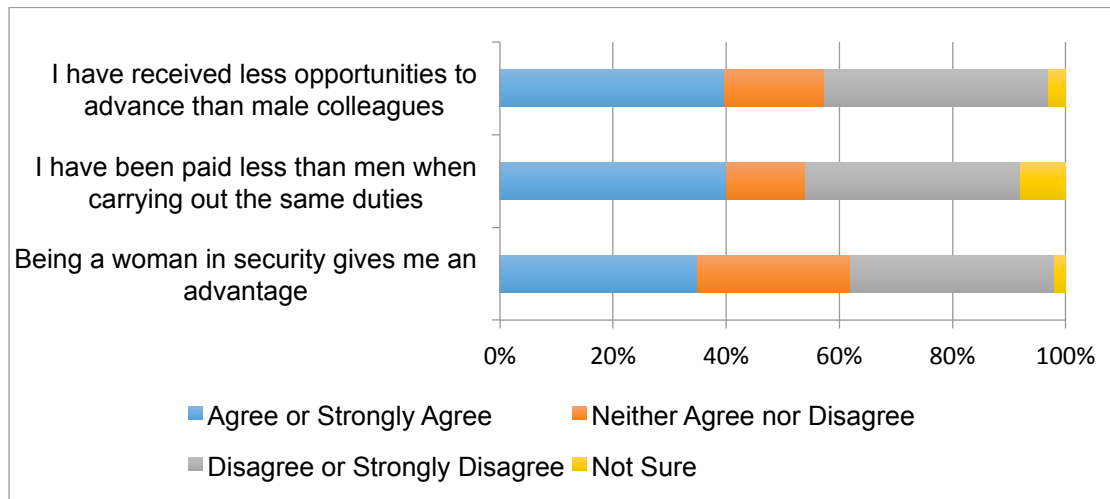


4.40 In terms of experiences affected by gender, for three of the statements presented, the proportion of respondents experiencing the issue is arguably noteworthy, but a very similar proportion disagreed, suggesting these issues although important, are less commonplace than those considered above. Two-fifths indicated they had received less opportunities to advance than male colleagues (both agree and disagree 40%, n=249); and that they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties (agree 40%, n=249; disagree 38%, n=238).

4.41 Interestingly, over a third indicated that being a woman in security gives them an advantage (35%, n=218) although slightly more disagreed (36%, n=228).

4.42 These findings are displayed in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Experiences affected by gender – neutral scores (n=628-630) %



4.43 There were however some statements which reflected more positively on the security industry and/or women’s experiences.

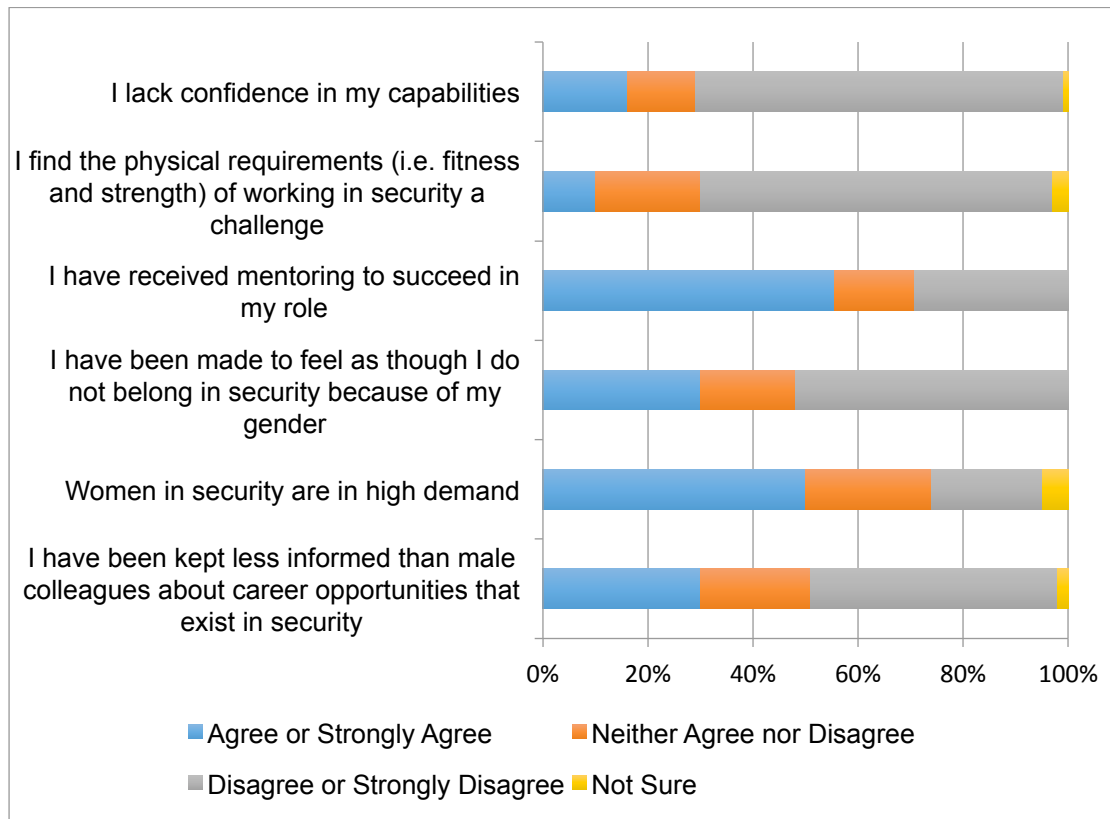
4.44 More than two-thirds disagreed with the statement that they lack confidence in their capabilities (70%, n=435)⁶⁴; and almost as many disagreed that they find the physical requirements (i.e. fitness and strength) of working in security a challenge (67%, n=419).

4.45 More than half indicated that they had received mentoring to succeed in their role (55%, n=348), around half disagreed that they had been made to feel as though they do not belong in security because of their gender (52%, n=327); and half felt that women in security are in high demand (50%, n=312). Just under half disagreed that they had been kept less informed than male colleagues about career opportunities that exist in security (47%, n=297).

4.46 Figure 9 displays the results.

⁶⁴ Interestingly, agreement that they lack confidence was more common among those at ‘area manager’ level (30%) and ‘security consultant’ level (27%) than any other roles. Agreement was least common among those at ‘security officer’ level and ‘security supervisor’ level (each 11%).

Figure 9: Experiences affected by gender – positive scores (n=624-628) %



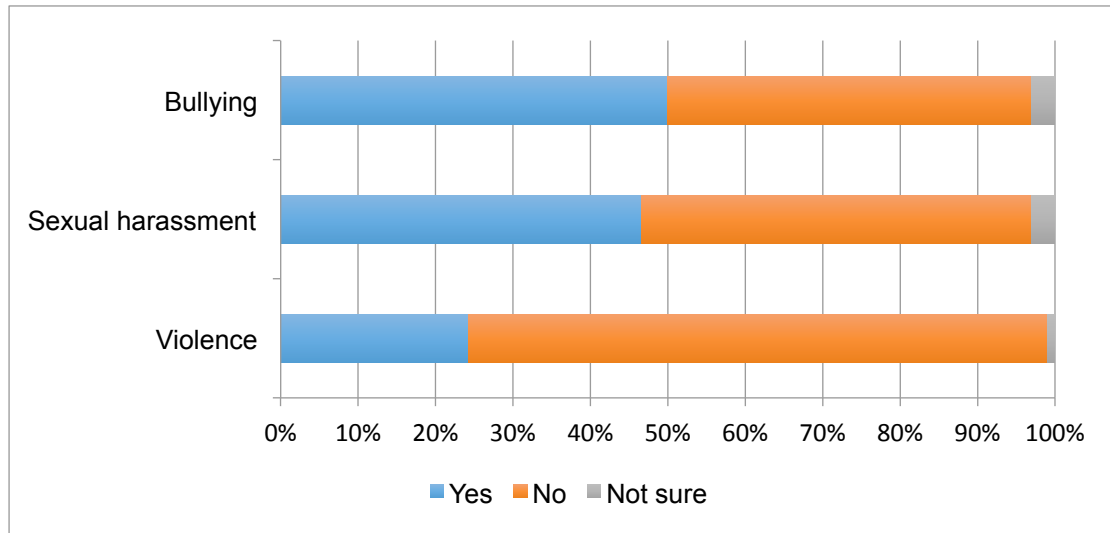
Experiences of abuse

- 4.47 Despite the generally positive perception of the security sector noted above, of those who answered the question, two thirds of respondents (64%, n=421) had experienced one or more of the three types of behaviour explored by the survey (bullying, sexual harassment and violence by male colleagues/managers or the public while working in a security role).
- 4.48 Of those who answered, 50% (n=324) had experienced bullying. This was more commonly experienced by those who had been in the industry for longer, 30% of those in the industry less than a year rising to 72% of those in the industry for over 20 years. This was also a little more commonly experienced by caregivers (56% of caregivers reported experiences of bullying compared with 48% of non-caregivers).
- 4.49 Close to half of the respondents (47%, n=298) had experienced sexual harassment and this was also more commonly experienced by those who had been in the industry for longer (experienced by 29% of those in the industry less than a year, rising to 61% of those in the industry for over 20 years).
- 4.50 A quarter of the respondents (24%, n=158) experienced violence from male colleagues/managers or the public while working in a security role. Notably, a greater proportion of respondents who are contracted

(30%) had experienced violence than those who are in-house (19%). Further, respondents at 'security supervisor' level had more commonly experienced such violence (47%) than any other level of security work (this was followed by 'security officers' at 30% and then by higher levels of work which varied from 9% to 26%).

4.51 Figure 10 displays the proportion of the overall sample with these experiences.

Figure 10. Experience of abuse (n=635-645) %



Approaches to overcoming barriers

4.52 Respondents were asked whether they had received, seen or provided a number of practices, which had been identified in the literature review as possible approaches to overcome barriers that women in security may face. Three-fifths of respondents (59%, n=356) indicated that they had come across flexible working hours. However, for all other approaches listed, a minority (i.e. less than 50%) of respondents had experienced them. Notably, one of the lowest scores, only 16% (n=98), were aware of talks or information given out that highlights security as a career option for women, which would suggest that little is being done to try to attract women to the security industry.

4.53 Notably, 35% of respondents indicated experience of mentorship programmes, compared with 55% above that in response to an earlier question indicated they had received mentoring to succeed in their role. The difference in scores would suggest that informal mentoring is more commonplace than formal mentoring programmes.

4.54 The full list of approaches explored and the frequency with which respondents have come across them is displayed in Table 2.

4.55 Alongside this, views on the perceived effectiveness of each approach are presented. For most, a high proportion of respondents perceived

them to be effective or very effective in encouraging women to participate and progress in the security industry. Mentorship programmes were viewed as effective by the highest proportion of respondents (84%, n=474), followed by flexible working hours (80%, n=447). Those approaches considered effective by fewest respondents were partnership with local non-governmental organisations, charities, or other third parties in regards to women’s experiences in the sector (57%, n=318) and reporting practices for annual reports etc. that use gender sensitive language (43%, n=242).

4.56 Given how effective the approaches are perceived to be, it is striking that experience of them is so low, and it would suggest that greater adoption of these approaches would be beneficial.

Table 2: Views on approaches to overcoming barriers

Approaches	Experienced % (n=602-608)	Effective % (n=558-562)
Flexible working hours	59%	80%
Complaints processes for sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, bullying etc. that result in each complaint being taken seriously and investigated	41%	77%
Mentorship programmes	35%	84%
Support for women to author papers and speak on conference panels	29%	68%
Confidential reporting system for gender-related issues	29%	65%
Events around understanding women’s unique experience in the sector	26%	71%
Family-friendly practices	24%	73%
Human resources policies to increase the representation of females in the workforce	22%	71%
Women leadership programmes	20%	76%
Talks or information given out that highlights security as a career option for women	16%	76%
Partnership with local non-governmental organisations, charities, or other third parties in regard to women’s experiences in the sector	15%	57%
Reporting practices for annual reports etc. that use gender sensitive language	9%	43%

Differing Experiences by Characteristics

4.57 Having considered the sample as a whole, we now explore in further detail how answers to the survey differed among those with specific characteristics: type of employment; the level of their role; length of time in the industry; experience of abuse; and overall view of the industry. Below is a summary of the findings - a fuller version including figures is provided in Appendix 3.

By type of employment

4.58 There was a noteworthy difference between those respondents working 'in-house' (i.e. employed directly by an organisation such as a bank, university, hospital etc.) and those 'contracted' (i.e. employed by a security company and contracted to work at/with a site or number of sites).

4.59 There were a number of ways in which experiences appeared to be less positive for contracted than for in-house respondents. As noted above, in-house respondents more commonly had an improved perception of the industry than when they first started, compared with contracted respondents. But further, they were more like to agree with some of the negative characteristics of the industry (that may be off putting to women) including that wages are low, that security roles are not permanent and not full time. They also less commonly viewed work in security as attractive and had less commonly advanced in their career.

4.60 In terms of potential discrimination and being treated differently to men, contracted respondents more commonly agreed that they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties and that they had experienced violence (by male managers/colleagues/the public). They also had less experience of all the potential approaches to overcoming barriers explored in the survey and were less likely to view some of the approaches as effective.

4.61 There were very few areas in which contracted respondents had a more positive experience than in-house – however a greater proportion of in-house respondents viewed security as an “old boys club”; and less in-house respondents agreed that women in security are in high demand.

By role

4.62 Similarly, there were a number of ways in which the experiences of those operating at a more 'junior' level were different to those operating in higher-level roles.

4.63 More commonly, 'negatives' in relation to the industry (that may be off putting to women) were experienced by those at a more junior level. The respondents at 'security officer' level and 'security supervisor' level

less commonly agreed that work in the security industry is attractive; and more commonly agreed that security roles are not permanent, than those working at a higher level.

- 4.64 Respondents at 'security officer' level: more commonly agreed that wages are comparatively low within security; and less commonly agreed that plenty of roles are full time, than those working at a higher level.
- 4.65 A greater proportion of respondents at 'security supervisor' level reported experiencing violence from male colleagues/managers or the public while working in a security role than of any other level of work (this was followed by 'security officers' and then by higher levels of work).
- 4.66 For many of the potential approaches to overcoming barriers explored within the survey, more respondents in higher-level roles had experienced these than those in more 'junior' level roles.
- 4.67 It was apparent however that some issues had a greater impact on those respondents that were working at a higher level within security. More of those working at a higher level indicated they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties (which typically increased the higher the level of the role); and more agreed that their experience of security is that it is an "old boys club". Further, a greater proportion of those in higher levels roles agreed that they had had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect.

By length of time working in security

- 4.68 It was notable that some experiences differed by the length of time the respondent had been working in the security industry. Where differences were apparent, on the whole it was commonly those working in the industry for longer who had experienced some of the less desirable characteristics.
- 4.69 That said it was notable that the overall perception of security was more commonly positive among those who had been working in the industry for the longest (over 20 years) than among those that had been working in the industry for less than a year. This could in part be related to the correlation between length of time in security and experience of promotion/advancement.
- 4.70 In relation to the potential for experiencing discrimination, a greater proportion of those working in the industry for longer:
- Indicated they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties;
 - Reported experiences of bullying and sexual harassment by male colleagues/managers or the public when at work;

- Agreed that their experience in security is that it is an “old boys club”;
 - Agreed that they have had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect;
 - Agreed they have had to prove their capabilities while male colleagues are automatically viewed as capable.
- 4.71 Unsurprisingly, typically those who had worked in the industry for longer were more familiar with the approaches for overcoming barriers explored, than those who were fairly new to the industry.
- 4.72 There were however a small number of aspects which were less favourable to those who were newer to the industry. Those who had worked in the industry for a short amount of time more commonly disagreed with the statement that plenty of security roles are full-time, and more commonly agreed that they lack confidence in their capabilities than those working in the industry for a long time.

By experience of abuse

- 4.73 Those who reported experiencing one or more types of abuse covered by the survey (sexual harassment, bullying and violence) generally speaking were less likely to be positive about aspects of work in security than those that did not indicate they had experienced these types of abuse.
- 4.74 Not only had less of those who had experienced these types of abuse had a positive overall experience of the security industry; they less commonly agreed that work in the security industry is attractive; they less commonly agreed that the security industry is synonymous with professionalism; and more commonly viewed the industry as male-centered.
- 4.75 In terms of their experiences of the security industry, those who had experienced these types of abuse less commonly viewed security work as compatible with family life; and considerably more commonly felt that women are less likely to get the promotion when equally qualified and experienced men and women both apply for the same promotion.
- 4.76 Other differences included that those who had experienced these types of abuse more commonly indicated:
- They have been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties;
 - They have been less involved in decision-making than male peers;
 - They view security as an “old boys club”;
 - They have received less opportunities to advance than male colleagues;
 - They have received less respect from peer than male colleagues;

- They have had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect;
- They have been treated different because they are a woman;
- They have been made to feel as though they do not belong in security because of their gender;
- They have had to prove their capabilities, while male colleagues are automatically viewed as capable;
- They have been kept less informed than male colleagues about career opportunities that exist in security;
- They have been adversely affected by inflexible working hours affecting their work/life balance.

4.77 Finally, those who had experienced one or more of these types of abuse less commonly agreed that being a woman has not created any barriers while working in the security industry.

By overall view of the industry

4.78 It was noteworthy that the vast majority of the findings within the survey correlated with respondents overall view of the industry. In other words those that had a negative overall view of the industry (albeit there were few overall with a negative view) more commonly experienced discrimination, the aspects of the industry deemed less attractive (such as inflexible working hours and low pay), and were less likely to have been promoted and less commonly experienced the barriers/mechanisms for overcoming inequality (such as mentoring programmes, women leadership programmes, flexible working hours etc.) than those with an overall positive view of the industry.

Summary of quantitative findings

4.79 The results are illuminating. The relatively high proportion of respondents with a positive overall impression of the security sector is welcome, but the warnings about potential barriers are stark. The majority of respondents viewed the industry as male centered and there are consequences of this. That some two thirds of respondents had experienced abusive behaviour is evidence of the broader experience of women. At the same time the findings challenge some of the notions within the literature, such that women may lack confidence or lack the physical capabilities required for work in security.

4.80 Crucially though, it was clear that approaches to overcome the range of barriers that women may face are typically underused but largely perceived to be effective. This suggests that there is scope for employers to review their approach, consider what additional strategies they could adopt and ensure strategies to encourage equality are implemented effectively.

4.81 The following section looks at the findings from the qualitative research; they add more depth and provide additional insights.

Section 5. Qualitative findings

Background

- 5.1 Much of the evidence provided by respondents concerned negative experiences and the changes required by industry. It is upon these factors that this section focuses, in order to explore the issues that arise in depth and present the corresponding changes required. However, it is important to note, that while the respondents identified many significant areas where changes were required, positive changes to the industry were also observed, these were identified, for example, in observations of increasing numbers of women entering the field, and experiences of lessening inequality.
- 5.2 This section presents the qualitative findings gathered via two routes: First, formal interviews with 21 female security professionals employed in a variety of roles, and from a number of different countries, covering a range of topics to gain a more detailed understanding of the themes covered by the survey. More informal feedback provided by two individuals is included here also.
- 5.3 Second, responses to the following open survey questions:
- *'what factors would encourage women to pursue careers in the security sector?'* (n=410);
 - *'what would enable women to succeed in the field?'* (n=393);
 - *'have you experienced any other approaches taken to encourage women to enter and/or progress in security'* [than those specifically listed within the survey] (n=82); and
 - *'do you have any other comments you would like to make about the experiences of women in security'* (n=247).
- 5.4 The information gathered via both routes has been compiled and is presented in two main sections – 'key issues for women in security', and 'action needed to overcome barriers'; each of which are further broken down in to key themes.

Part 1 - Key issues for women in security

- 5.5 A number of key issues arose in the feedback from respondents that helped to illustrate the experiences of women working in the industry. The following aspects are considered in turn:
- The bigger picture of gender inequality
 - How women are treated differently
 - Lack of recognition for 'other' skills
 - Progression
 - Personal attributes needed in security
 - Responding to discriminatory behaviour
 - The nature of security work

The bigger picture of gender inequality

- 5.6 Many of the experiences of inequality described in the following sections were recognised by respondents as being a consequence of broader societal issues, for example, the dominance of traditional gender roles for men and women:

'This is a reflection of society - to change it we need to think radically about the way we portray women in general.'

[Survey respondent]

- 5.7 This was also shown in the responses of those who talked about how the perceptions of the public and clients limited the opportunities that employers provided them with or how they experienced discrimination from clients or members of the public, for example, some cultures would not accept protection from a female:

'Women are more likely to be harassed by clients. They are the first ones that underestimate our power.'

(Survey respondent)

'It's very divisive. We are often governed by the client's cultural beliefs or expectations. An example may be that security is provided to Middle Eastern families or men and often they don't view women as equal or won't accept a woman in a role of security. We stand little chance when certain countries only allowed women to drive in 2018.'

(Survey respondent)

'In a way, the problem is not the companies employing women but the public who deem women as less capable.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.8 However, while some of the issues faced by women were noted to be symptomatic, and a reflection, of issues in wider society, the narrative evidence suggested that the security sector was behind other sectors in terms of equality. For example:

'I come from investment banking and I have never experienced this kind of resistance against women, we're left out of meetings and email. When we ask they decline courses to further our career. Many quit because we feel defeated.'

(Survey respondent)

'Have never heard "oh you're a woman" used so much in any other industry.'

(Survey respondent)

'Banking is more diverse and was about 15 years ahead of security.'

(Interviewee 21, Director, France)

'I'd come from the prison service and didn't sense any barriers in that. I found it worse in security.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

'When I was first getting in to it I thought it would be like the police where women are accepted. I was very taken back in the security industry that they hadn't progressed the same way and there was not a lot of women in the industry and there was none at management level when I started.'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

How women are treated differently

5.9 The respondents provided many wide-ranging examples of how they had been treated differently to male colleagues, or discriminated against. These are explored below, however, it is important to note that not all interviewees indicated they had experienced discrimination or barriers in security based on their gender. Additionally, of those who had experienced discrimination not all felt it had held them back or been detrimental to their career.

Discrimination based on gender

5.10 There were many examples where women had been impacted by traditional stereotyped perceptions of the role of women in the workplace, for example assumptions that they were present at business meetings to make drinks for other attendees, take notes, or more generally, were viewed as junior to other male colleagues:

'I've walked in to rooms mid-career as the subject matter expert at the table and there is a clear, 'what is she doing here' you know, why did you bring this female? And you have to be introduced by the others as the expert.'

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

'When I started sometimes its difficult because they think I've come to prepare coffee – has that changed – no.'

(Interviewee 11, Manager, France)

'If during a meeting, around a table, there is only one woman, and in this type of industry that happens a lot, they would assume that you would pour out the tea or take the notes purely because of your gender. They'd ask: "is anyone going to take notes?" and the men would look over and assume it's you. Or "Can [name] get you some tea?" The natural assumption that the female will pick up the more domestic or administrative tasks when they are on the same level as the other people in the room.'

(Interviewee 15, Director, UK)

'Many new members of male staff who do not know me, expect that I am also a new starter, despite the fact that I have worked for the company for a year and a half, but do not direct this sort of attention to other male members of staff.'

(Interviewee 17, Officer, UK)

- 5.11 A particularly striking aspect of stereotyping was the perceived allocation of 'female' tasks. While it was acknowledged there were some roles (such as conducting body searches) where a female was specifically needed but was performing the same role as a man, a number of respondents reflected on the barriers faced by being allocated 'female' tasks which were generally perceived to be less interesting, less challenging or safer than other tasks. Additionally, some respondents noted that because there were few women in the workplace, they were frequently limited to these roles.
- 5.12 This approach resulted in women who were equally capable and qualified as their male counterparts missing out on job experience required to progress in their career. Some of the women spoke about how this role limitation was sometimes through misplaced but well-intentioned motivations (e.g. concern for and protectiveness over females), there were frequent examples where this was not the case, however. Some illustrative examples include:

'Due to the shortage of women in the industry we always tend to get the crap job of searching which nobody enjoys, very seldom get the good exciting jobs, because of this.'

(Survey respondent)

' "Women are only good for searching other women" - comments made by many male staff.'

(Survey respondent)

'You are perceived as the weaker gender. You do seem to get the rough end of the deal with positions in events. They won't have a female on a response team. And there tends to be only one female for an entire event. I've had it a few occasions when working in town – comments like you're a woman, you have to do this, you can't do that. Well excuse me, I've got the same qualifications and training as you and probably more experience.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

'I would say when I first started looking, the jobs I was steered in to was the more female jobs – account executive – when I went to ASIS meetings. Most females I met were not from the PD [police department] they were mostly in HR and sales ... still a boys club. I still feel I was being pushed in to the female jobs. Most women...vast majority are all sales and account executives. Not really physical security by and large.'

(Interviewee 10, Officer, US)

- 5.13 The respondents described how these experiences of prejudice also highlighted broader archaic perceptions held about security as a whole, and how to resolve situations, for example, that door security is about physical intimidation rather than de-escalation skills:

'I did not work for them for very long, they put the big guys out front. I call them the puffer chests because all they do is walk around with their puffer chest out. But to me, that is not security.'

(Interviewee 12, Officer, UK)

'Myself and other females quite often feel that the men are picked for supervising a door. Why can't I do that? I've had 10 shifts cancelled at a venue for a male to do it. I've brought it up numerous times. They said there's no favouritism, there's no reason for it and it won't happen again, but it does. It makes you not want to work that venue. And I've been told the client does feel if there's a larger bigger man on the door it will put other people off being troublemakers. No one knows my background. I can deal with lots of situations. All my training has been about de-escalation but you do get the male colleagues, a lot de-escalate, but you get the ones that want to be the big 'I am', in some situations that's unnecessary – it leads to more trouble and you wonder why.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

- 5.14 Some women reported experiences of being turned down for a role they were qualified for, specifically because they were female:

'I've applied for jobs and been turned down because I am a woman and they were looking for a big guy. I can do that job just as well. I can handle myself in a fight. They say "We're only looking for guys because we need them for front gates". I'm not worried about that, but they are. I've worked with guys who will watch people brawl and they won't deal with it – their job is to separate them but they don't. I've made complaints about that, but nothing gets done.'

(Interviewee 4, Officer, Australia)

- 5.15 One interviewee, discussing the employment discrimination she experienced talked about how she had trained in close protection but had not yet been able to obtain a role and had specifically been advised that this was because she was a female:

'They have this vision you should be built like Arnie [Schwarzenegger], tall, super stud, and if you're a female you don't tick those boxes. So it's adios. I've been round to several companies and asked what type of person are you looking for, they say – "it's a male role", I say – "is that not a bit sexist", they say – "no, it needs to be a male role". I say – "why?" They say – "because of the nature of bodyguarding, it's a male person, they [client] want a male bodyguard". I say – "is there no females out there that need close protection?" They say – "yeah but they prefer males". I say rubbish you just want males because

they have this imposing attitude don't come near me. As a woman they think you're a push over. Don't forget you don't need to be Arnie – you just need to know what you are doing. You can bring someone down easily without being physically big. I was quite surprised really because I thought everything was equal these days. You do see female bodyguards out there. Surely it can't be that difficult. But boy did I underestimate that.'

(Interviewee 9, Officer, UK)

- 5.16 There were also examples of women receiving less recognition than male counterparts, their success being downplayed and having to work harder to prove themselves:

'I have worked my way to the top by putting twice as much work in and it would be nice if that wasn't the case'.

(Survey respondent)

'I would say that absolutely I have had to work and prove myself more than male counterparts in my industry – I do know that – I know from tech and security that you have to exhibit an absolute stellar, no mistakes, I am the expert persona.'

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

'When I went in to that world you know you have to be on top of your game – working you're arse off really hard – doing more than male colleagues consistently because of the spotlight on you. You can't let the side down and that is still the type of world it is. I would say it is still challenging. A guy wouldn't have had to have done that though, prove himself.'

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

'I think the barriers are changing, in the past you have had to prove yourself in a way that was different for men, higher expectations perhaps, but I think that is changing.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

- 5.17 Some respondents noted experiencing illegal interview questions or employment practices which were gender related:

'There's also always an underlying urge from male management to establish when you plan to start a family and that just feels like a short fall to put off investing in your development.'

(Survey respondent)

'Being asked in interviews about work life balance and my family, which I know is illegal and more than likely not a question my male counterparts are getting. I was also once asked in an informal interview if I was pregnant (I was not, again - illegal) and comments were made in that discussion such as "I couldn't send you to India because you'd get raped".'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.18 Comments also included examples of unconscious bias – viewpoints and processes that may exclude women but had seemingly not purposely been introduced to do so. For example, one respondent observed that some companies use automatic tracking software to review CV/résumés and would reject any with a gap in employment. She noted that since women were more likely to have taken time out to raise families, this process would automatically disadvantage capable female candidates:

'A lot of women have had time off from their working career for caretaking. Men normally never do. So when the résumé goes through automatic tracking software, when it sees a gap it bounces you out. Women are in and out of the workforce and they [men] are not.'

(Interviewee 10, Officer, US)

- 5.19 A few respondents noted that some roles specifically required military (or police) experience. While this was also noted to be a barrier to some men to progress, it was suggested that since women had also traditionally been less likely to work in the military/police, they would be less likely to meet the requirements but may have other suitable/equivalent experience. For example:

'The whole industry needs to look at people's skills, who they are and what they can do and not how they appear. Not everybody has to be ex military. That's all they seem to ask for – you get fed up of seeing it. I've done the combat arms course – I know how to fire a weapon – I may not have done it as much as some of the others, but you don't forget. We're not licensed to carry [a weapon] in this country [UK] anyway. The ex military thing comes in from being able to fend somebody off. It shouldn't have to get to that point to get you out of a situation.'

(Interviewee 9, Officer, UK)

Sexist behaviour

- 5.20 There were many examples of sexist behaviour and comments aimed at women and respondents stressed their frustration at having to navigate these occurrences. For example:

'In a meeting about 18 months ago I came in and the chairman introduced me as [Name's] wife, as if I don't exist as a person...when he did this I joked, I made fun of

him but he did not get it...I see it time and time again...it is about stereotypes...security does not look like a woman'.

(Interviewee 21, Director, France)

'It's a battle to be respected by male colleagues without being viewed in a negative way, I once overheard myself and my other female colleagues being described as praying mantis, if you Google them the insult is apparent. It's difficult to remain professional in the face of such mindlessness.'

(Survey respondent)

'It's not a good career path, on a number of occasions I have seen females belittled, blame shifted to them, or women made to feel weak by the actions of male colleagues, until actions like this sector wide are stopped it will continue to be a difficult role for women.'

(Survey respondent)

'Work place bullying is a serious issue as is not being taken seriously by management. I have received more sexist remarks and behaviour from superiors than peers, as a result of the macho, aggressive men that tend to be promoted and valued in the industry.'

(Survey respondent)

'Also use of words – people who say things just to see how far they could push me before I would complain. Could they trust me? Was I part of the boys club?'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

Sexual harassment and sexual violence.

5.21 While clearly also illustrative of discrimination based on gender, a sub section of the topic of discrimination concerned inappropriate and illegal behaviour directed towards women, with elements of sexual threat. These included the use of inappropriate sexual language, sexual harassment and sexual violence. For example:

'In my company I am promoting women. I have a young woman, 29, very good, she gets treated like shit by the client. They try not to speak to her and instead speak to her male assistant, they belittle her. Because they are a client it is difficult. We are on fragile ground.'

(Interviewee 21, Director, France)

There's also a snide little comment with sexual meaning and always double-[entendre] meaning. There are lots of innuendos. "Oh let's put that shirt on for you"; "have you wiped between the bottoms of your breasts". "You can sleep in my caravan if you like". "There's room in my bed". There are lots of things.'

(Interviewee 12, Officer, UK)

'If you sleep with me I'll get you to management. Point blank, it was very sexual. It was very, you know, if you do this to me, I'll do this for you.'

(Interviewee 12, Officer, UK)

'I had an example where I was at a meeting and other people were there, we went to dinner and one of the senior management called me and said he wants to get together, I attributed it to the amount of alcohol he imbibed and pretended I was working, well I was actually, and it did not happen again and he did not continue and it was never mentioned again.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

- 5.22 Many of the responses concerned being sexually objectified by colleagues and clients:

'Quite often on shift, male colleagues and people we work alongside but are not a part of our company they quite often say my job is to stand there and look pretty. Stuff like that really.'

(Interviewee 14, Officer, UK)

'I still have comments for the way I dress and look, nice dress, they think they are being nice. I don't think they will comment on a guy.'

(Interviewee 21, Director, France)

In my experience senior leaders were the worst and not just towards women but generally but especially women. They were vocal about shape, weight or that someone eats burgers and were judgemental, and they would talk openly what a "fat pig" our HR director was, I mean just not nice, and what are they saying about me?'

(Interviewee 20, Consultant, US)

'Women should not be treated as a sexual object in the workplace by customers or staff. There should be much more done to stop this. I have received unwanted touching, dick pics, pressured for dates and told to sleep with people in just five months.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.23 Some of the responses showed that sexist behaviour was a common and 'expected' behaviour in the industry and that it was an individual's responsibility to cope or ignore the behaviour, rather than the industry's responsibility to change:

'One thing I struggle with is I think there is quite a bit of sexual harassment in the security industry – by certain individuals. It can get laughed over. People report it – sometimes its shocking what men will say in front of colleagues – its quite shocking nowadays. I've had stuff happen to me verbally that is disgusting quite frankly and female colleagues have said that's happened to us.'

People think you should expect it in this environment, but I had more respect in the prison service than out here.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

- 5.24 Some of the responses concerned inappropriate behaviour by senior leadership, and highlighted poor reporting mechanisms and company responses, and the detrimental impact of speaking up about sexism in the workplace:

'A very senior leader within the organisation that I was working for at the time, you know made some comments that I felt were a bit sexist and I made an attempt to explain to him how that made me feel and how that makes us and made us as an organisation look and that information was not very well received. I was laid off less than six months later.'

(Interviewee 13, Manager, US)

'Three times I called people out. Leadership, I pulled someone aside when he made sexist comments about women in general and curse words were used and embarrassing behaviour really. I pulled him aside and said it was inappropriate. His response was that is way I talk so I said then you are an idiot but I was calm. I also said to someone else would you speak to your wife or daughter that way? Two guys in fact and they said nothing just a stare and I eventually got half an apology. One was really recent.'

(Interviewee 20, Consultant, US)

- 5.25 Some of the respondents talked about how they were excluded from aspects of their role, for example, one respondent talked about being unable to take part in some aspects of client relationship management because client entertainment was held in sexual entertainment venues, in which she felt uncomfortable and was unwilling to attend:

'When I was in the VP role for [company] I was the only senior female so when you go entertain clients there are the trips to the strip club which I wouldn't go to because I wouldn't feel comfortable.'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

Lack of recognition for 'other' skills

- 5.26 A number of respondents highlighted that women held skills that are more traditionally associated as 'female' that are advantageous in security careers, particularly those that involved contact with members of the public. For example, respondents talked about conflict resolution, de-escalation and people-management skills:

'Women should be appreciated for the vital contribution they make to any security team, conflict resolution is key'

and often the female voice is the voice of reason, not of ego and testosterone.'

(Survey respondent)

'Certainly in some situations – when I had one particular place that I worked at for about 6 months, I was doing crowd control at a sporting club – quiet, retirees having a few drinks and a few pokie machines, occasionally deal with someone drunk in the evening. A lot of them tend to be respectful of the fact I am a woman. They would say sorry for swearing in front of me. I could play with that and control the situation. By talking with them, and instead of cutting off people from drinking – say slow down have some water and you can have another drink in 15 minutes. Some guys [male security officers] throw their weight around – say you're cut off – out you go, and they start fights because they are abrupt and dismissive. It's a manner of dealing with people. Sometimes it comes in your favour. As a woman, because I'm only short, 5'6 – I'm not intimidating. Most of the time it takes them back from that edge and they don't see me as a blockade.'

(Interviewee 4, Officer, Australia)

'I think we bring in more people management skills and diversity in a male dominated world. Everywhere I worked in management functions, I was viewed as a plus for my way to look at things. To soften things, to broaden things.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.27 It was suggested that the value of these skills was not always recognised and that efforts were needed to better train security personnel to understand the full range of skills and strengths that would benefit a team.

Progression

- 5.28 While some respondents felt they had been encouraged and supported to progress and had been treated equally to male colleagues, a number of respondents shared examples where they felt that they had been overlooked in favour of males because of gender, or that they had had to work harder than males to get to the same place:

'This company has a completely female management team. I have been able to progress. But I know others that haven't been able to because it is a boys club.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

'I have spent a long time in the industry working from guard level up, I feel I've had to work a lot harder to move up the chain of command than my male counterparts and have had my confidence knocked several times due to bullying in the workplace combined with some of the older generation old boys network where I was felt excluded from a lot of things.'

(Survey respondent)

'I was told [by male manager] there's nothing really. I emailed the learning and development manager directly and she sent me a whole list of stuff I never knew was available.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

'It is possible further advancement was blocked after I became director of security, when we merged companies they chose a male even though I had more extensive and a different background. I think it was two fold, gender and he was former law enforcement and I didn't have that.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

'I love security, I am confident and good at what I do, but I still hit road blocks when I compete with my male counterparts.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.29 One respondent recounted an experience where she actively sought to circumvent the discrimination women face in recruitment by sending two identical résumés for a job, one identifying herself as female and one using only her initials to mask her gender, and received an interview for only the latter:

'There was a position I was encouraged to apply for which was a stretch, nice title but not a great salary and I sent in two résumés, one with my full name and one with my initials, and they were similar, not lies, and with the same credentials. They could have seen they were the same. I got the interview with the one with the initials so when they called in fact I spoke to their female secretary who thought I was a secretary. She laughed when I told her, and so she said this is so good, I won't tell them. So I walked in and these guys were floored it was a women and I got the job beating an FBI agent and it was three interviews so quite a process. I was only in my 20s and that was my first director role.'

(Interviewee 20, Consultant, US)

- 5.30 One interviewee noted that in order to progress in her career she had had to carefully research and target areas where she identified women were able to succeed. This highlights the additional barriers and work that women may face in order to succeed in the sector:

'I've moved up fairly quickly but I also made cautious decisions where I knew females would be accepted. Definitely through networking, talking to other females, attending conferences, you get a good feel of the sectors that are open minded and treat individuals the same. There are some industries I wouldn't go in again – contract security – it is a male dominated industry and females do not get the respect.'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

- 5.31 A few of the respondents noted that being female had been an advantage in the respect that because there are so few females in security, they were in more demand:

'I applied as licensed security, even if I applied as just a steward, I would have more chance of getting the job because I was a woman.'

(Interviewee 14, Officer, UK)

'I have only had advantages I have been selected for certain things because I am a woman. I don't mind, we need women leaders to set examples. Gender is just not a barrier, I have not come across anything that is really bad, I have this opposite experience that I have been selected and supported and not stopped.'

(Interviewee 18, Scandinavia)

'Over the last two years things have changed. Most of the positions in the security world in France are for women. We are recruiting a new CSO in finance and they want a woman, this is true in lots of roles...I would appoint a woman who was not as good as a man, good but not as good, and then provide mentoring, that is acceptable. It creates huge resentment amongst men, they find it demeaning, they are not being promoted.'

(Interviewee 21, Director, France)

Personal attributes needed in security

- 5.32 In light of the numerous instances of discrimination it is perhaps unsurprising that some of the respondents discussed the personal attributes a woman needed to overcome this discrimination and succeed in the security industry. A number reflected that women in security needed to be particularly resilient in order to succeed and overcome the additional barriers and hurdles that women currently faced in the field. Being, strong, confident and making yourself heard came up repeatedly:

'Be strong and don't take no for an answer. They will try to intimidate you and even question your intelligence. Listen to podcasts, read, watch YouTube video, take a class. Do whatever it takes to show them you belong there and earned it.'

(Survey respondent)

'Be strong, cope with male attitude, self confidence (not being a sensitive fragile person, you need to stand up against the male culture).'

(Survey respondent)

'Don't be intimidated by loud opinionated peers.'

(Survey respondent)

'Strong willed thick-skinned.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.33 Some survey respondents made comments relating to the way in which they had adopted (or observed others adopting) more stereotypically male characteristics in order to succeed in the industry:

'I've succeeded by demonstrating traditionally "man like" characteristics - difficult to articulate here exactly what I mean but I believe my no-nonsense, straight talking, firm no bullsh!t approach has helped me to succeed in a male dominated sector. I don't cry off for childcare issues, I stay out late at socials, I've had to play the game as sad as it sounds.'

(Survey respondent)

'To survive, I need to become one of the guys. To succeed, I need to be more masculine than the men. It's an uphill climb for women.'

(Survey respondent)

'From what I see a lot of female security do act like men just to be taken seriously. If I am working beside a male co-worker, customers default to the male, they won't listen to me but listen to the man. Women harden themselves up to get people to listen to them from inside and outside the company.'

(Interviewee 14, Officer, UK)

'I would question whether it is about being more male. There is a mindset you have to have to be in security – you have to be a tough, capable – very – you have to be something that we associate with 'maleness'. This is not an industry for the faint of heart. You are going to see some horrible things – your job is to protect other people from horrible things. If you can't deal with those things, you will be damaged by this industry. You have to act like an industry person rather than a man or woman, but we tend to attribute these things to men. You can do so in a strong female way.'

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

'In my first meetings with people I did things, I would lower my voice, wear a black suit, maybe ensuring I was something other than being the female me. I am toning that down, I don't know why and that is something we learn early on. I have not tried the alternative approach by trying to be tough.'

(Interviewee 18, Scandinavia)

5.34 Some reflected on actions they had taken to 'fit in' with men:

'I genuinely wonder if I didn't stay behind at the bar after meetings with senior directors if I would have the respect I have now. I am sad to say that as a woman who is not ultra feminine I am given more respect. I am shocked by how fellow security advisors who choose to dress in shorter skirts etc. get treated by some of the older very senior men in the industry. Their intelligence is completely disregarded.'

(Survey respondent)

'I don't have to be one of guys, but if you have to play golf – you do it – you do have to do those things.'

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

5.35 Others suggested that exhibiting stereotypical 'male' characteristics was not necessary for women to succeed:

'I definitely do not think they need to act like men. I think they bring their own skills and attributes. Something that we notice, particularly for front-line security personnel, is that if we have a whole male team and put 1-2 females in the team, the team dynamic changes and people respond differently to women sometimes because they may deal with situations differently and may have a different approach. It is going back to that be true to yourself. Why would you adopt the behaviour of a guy when you have your own skills and abilities and you should be confident in them.'

(Interviewee 15, Director, UK)

'I think we all need to act like professional people, not "men" and "women"?''

(Interviewee 17, Officer, UK)

'It is not about whether you act like a man, it is do you have skills, the leadership and can you think on your feet? And that is not about gender.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

'Do I think that women in the industry are doing that? I mean yeah. To a degree. Particularly whether you are talking about the law enforcement side. Folks from the law enforcement side, I think they do try and take on more masculine personality traits. I do not think that is crucial to being successful.'

(Interviewee 13, Manager, US)

'I have seen that – some other colleagues do that and be more masculine. I don't do that, I'm proud of who I am. I will be myself. Joining any new company or department, networking is important – a little different with guys but need to connect with them as well. I wouldn't change my personality or be less feminine. When you are younger there is more pressure to do that and I have seen it. But now approaching 50 and I'm myself, like it or not. I'm the boss.'

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

Responding to discriminatory behaviour

- 5.36 It is notable that respondents frequently talked about the different tactics they had adopted to cope with discriminatory behaviour. Some respondents reported that they would ignore the behaviour or act to 'prove them wrong' by demonstrating their capabilities and allowing their work to speak for itself:

For me, they say their comment. I say fair enough and then I prove them wrong. Through my work I show them.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

'Pretty head-on and choosing not to engage.'

(Interviewee 14, Officer, UK)

- 5.37 Others talked about speaking to the individual directly or reporting the behaviour to management:

It definitely makes a difference coming from a policing background - we have been supported to challenge behaviour. There have been female only leadership courses – more mentoring of female colleagues, networking, recognising skills, supporting peers to bring them through. Encouraged each other to challenge anything inappropriate and the support network is there if you need to take things further – so that gives you confidence. Dealing with things head on and dealing with the individuals straight away really.

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

'Women need to be confident in their abilities, stand up to male prejudices. Not all men in security are sexist so don't be deterred by those dinosaurs who are.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.38 Notably, a significant proportion of those who had made the decision to speak up about discriminatory behaviour, including sexual harassment, spoke about ineffective reporting mechanisms in the industry, and weak or non-existent management responses. Some mentioned that companies who talked positively about equality and inclusivity were not living up to their promise, others talked about retaliations and negative consequences for reporting. Some talked about how weak responses

to reporting had led them to adopt different tactics to coping with discrimination, primarily, putting up with or ignoring behaviours. Some illustrative examples include:

'Being brutally honest, reporting in this industry doesn't go anywhere. Its pointless reporting anything.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

'At the beginning it would bother me and I would complain about the conversations but I would learn that nothing would get done. So I learned you know what, you can do what you want. I'm still gong to be successful. I will go the long way around the barriers if I have to.'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

'No use reporting it really. Like, it is not really. The company would not see it as anything out of usual. I kind of generally try to ignore it and brush it aside.'

(Interviewee 14, Officer, UK)

'I have reported them. The one instance in a meeting I didn't need to because everyone witnessed it, in another I did. In a workplace, I did. It was so egregious, the HR director got fired and she did the investigation and I saw that as retaliatory. I never heard anything again.'

(Interviewee 20, Consultant, US)

I have had a lot of support but sometimes feel fobbed off a little bit. I personally think the – females in security, bullying, harassment – it's always said it won't be tolerated but its all words but its not being stamped out. You get the banter and laughs straight after. Its not forceful enough.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

- 5.39 One interviewee observed that a lack of response to reporting issues may be starting to change:

'In my organisation any women who reported harassment were shot down and no outcomes were taken, no discipline was taken, now in the last few years that has changed and you would more likely be believed today. I think there is a lot more discussion openly and people are stepping up and talking about it and companies are becoming more sensitive and know they have to listen and the shift in human resource is to look at diversity and this has helped women to come forward. As more women reach higher levels of management it has opened up the possibility to talk more.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

- 5.40 Another interviewee elaborated on the importance of reporting:

'I definitely think it should be reported – I think those things – sometimes it is someone's personal

interpretation. If it can be reported and looked at they can see it may have not been explained properly. If that's what it is – on this occasion no – it was nothing to do with anything other than the way you do your job. There are times people are unfairly treated for the wrong reasons – colour, sex, personal dislike. That will always be the case – its human nature to judge people. And the only way to tackle it is to have a robust reporting system to deal with.'

(Interviewee 7, Manager, UK)

- 5.41 Crucially, some respondents highlighted that it is not always possible to overcome or tolerate discrimination and there were examples of women leaving the industry, changing jobs or otherwise failing to thrive in security due to their experiences of gender related discrimination:

'When I started my role there were 13 females on this department and I am the only one left. This says enough.'

(Survey respondent)

'I'm a female security officer for the last 6 years, I'm 5"11, trained in self defence and kickboxing, bigger muscles and bigger balls than most of my colleagues and I always seem to get the small, girly, weak jobs like reception duties or in charge of phones etc. I'm 80% more trained than the majority of men who started in security at the same time I did yet they are getting promoted before me. This year I've made up my mind that I'm going to get away from security as women are not taken seriously at all.'

(Survey respondent)

'It shouldn't be my fault – but at the end of the day I'm the one that has to move.'

(Interviewee 3, Officer, UK)

The nature of security work

- 5.42 Respondents generally acknowledged that women still more commonly hold parental and caregiver responsibilities than men and consequently more commonly face challenges of balancing this against their work. As already noted, this can pose a barrier to entry and progression and many highlighted the need for greater flexibility in shift patterns and working arrangements.

- 5.43 While generally, there was a feeling that there are certain realities of the security sector such as shift work and long hours, which could be more likely to present difficulties to parents/carers and therefore women, interviewees felt that in this regard security work was no worse than any other sector with similar working patterns:

'But I think we face the same challenges as any industry where there is an expectation for being on call.'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

'Its going to be the same as anyone that has shift work. Most jobs advertised will say if it is shifts. That may be a barrier – but it has to be night shifts if that is what is needed.'

(Interviewee 7, Manager, UK)

'Yeah it is difficult in security to maintain work home balance. Hours are variable – could be on various shifts and its very last minute with security – you won't get a booking til four days before an event. I think it's an industry problem rather than an individual company problem. People drop out, you get last minute calls. Not something that can be changed.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

'It can be a 24/7 demand on you with travel, time away from home, I think its quite difficult. I developed a support network at home for things I had to deal with. If you don't have that it would be difficult. The nature of the work – intelligence led – how to adapt – have to deal with this and may not be home for three days. Difficult and developing your support network – rope in family or paying people is certainly a challenge. There have been times I was at work when I should have been somewhere else. You do have to choose between them sometimes. You are making choices work over family – I have done that – with children and parents, sometimes I think I shouldn't but I had to.'

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

- 5.44 Nonetheless, respondents highlighted that more could be done to improve these aspects of the security sector and enable women (and others) with parental and caregiving responsibilities to succeed in the industry. This is considered further below (see para 5.61).

Part 2 - Action needed to overcome barriers

- 5.45 This section considers in turn the following key areas for action that most commonly arose in responses:

- Challenging attitudes and beliefs
- Redefining and promoting security
- Promoting security to young people
- Raising awareness of female success
- Recruitment practices
- Career progression
- Addressing working patterns
- Individual drive
- Networking
- Support from management

Challenging attitudes and beliefs

- 5.46 A clear theme from the respondents was the need for employers, (and the industry more generally) to challenge inappropriate attitudes and beliefs in the sector and promote cultural change. Generally respondents did not think employers were doing enough to ensure equality among the workforce. The respondents felt there was a need to, challenge incorrect but widely held beliefs that disadvantage women in the workplace; and to introduce policies and procedures for dealing effectively with discrimination.
- 5.47 The respondents perceived a gap between intentions and practice in the industry and emphasised the need to both develop and effectively implement appropriate approaches to deal with discrimination (such as a code of behavioural conduct) and hold staff, at all levels of seniority, accountable for their behaviour:

‘Even in [name of large security supplier company] – there is still not that equality and I don’t think the companies are pushing it. The old boys club status is still out there and I don’t know how you can permanently break down those walls. I think they need to start with the cultures that are in there. The majority have equality policies but its not recognised at the senior level. They follow their own policy of equality. Do a better job of actively recruiting. When I was a VP speaking to clients they were saying this is a breath of fresh air – new ideas, a female.’

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

‘Policies are fantastic – you can have as many policies as you like – if you walk in to head office and its all men – it doesn’t matter what policy is in place, that gives a clear message. If you have reporting systems for bullying, racism. If you walk in and nothing is actively being done. It has to be a cultural change – it has to happen on the ground level – it has to be very clear – when people are having a laugh and make an inappropriate comment – it has to be done there and then. It doesn’t need to be about managers – if you have the culture in place that that is just not acceptable. Sometimes you have to get rid of those with bias. It’s a long process to make a cultural change – it’s leading by example and ensuring everyone does. With a workforce you have to be the one when a sexist joke is made you have to be strong enough to say that is not appropriate.’

(Interviewee 7, Manager, UK)

- 5.48 Respondents also suggested that training was needed to raise awareness of diversity issues and set expectations for behaviour. Appropriate time points for this included when new recruits are inducted, but also among existing staff, including those in senior

positions, so that it is clear to all staff what is inappropriate behaviour. This was especially relevant given that respondents noted some senior managers and some of those who had been in the industry a long time acted inappropriately and held an 'old boys club' attitude, and most observations about appropriate behaviour or positive change was cited within relationships between more junior colleagues. It was also observed that women experienced inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour from men who were unaware that their behaviour was unacceptable, confirming the need to target training broadly:

'I think that in training or when doing your licence. I think even there, the females are looked at differently in training. They point out guys, come up show that – don't want to hurt the women. You have to set everyone together whether in training or meeting – speak as a group and embed it in everyone's head – we're all doing the same job, so we're all entitled to the same opportunities.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

'As I brought up with my ex employers – need to re-train them. People are coming from different backgrounds, culture is very different. I never seen something like that put in place. A behaviour policy.'

(Interviewee 3, Officer, UK)

'More comprehensive training that includes women and their strengths instead of being given the view that it is all about physical strength.'

(Survey respondent)

'Keynote speaker seminars where men are educated in the benefits of a fair and equal playing field.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.49 The importance of establishing clear and effective mechanisms to deal with discriminatory behaviour was highlighted. As noted above a number of respondents observed that reporting discrimination had been ineffective or detrimental because complaints were not dealt with appropriately. There were a number of comments regarding failures in human resources, and how safer complaint recording mechanisms that eliminated the potential negative impacts of reporting were required:

'Better confidential reporting system for harassment and misconduct. Often upper level male management rely on the fact that a door supervisor role is replaceable and complaints get buried.'

(Survey respondent)

'There must be greater acceptance that unconscious bias is very prevalent with external bodies responsible for handling complaints that are gender related. This would reduce fear of speaking out and encourage women to be more vocal in open forums. Currently there is fear of

recourse or belief that complaints about bias will not be listened to or acted upon.'

(Survey respondent)

'Very often issues get hidden as e.g. to raise challenges to performance like bullying can make the female a target still no matter how high performing she is. The age of Me Too had in ways not been particularly good on the ground to security gals as a single girl within an all male environment can be seen as a potential litigation problem for the business. Even though most are well seasoned at tolerating male discrimination (I enjoy proving them wrong) it is, however not easy sometimes :).'

(Survey respondent)

'It is a big fight to get the recognition from male colleagues and superiors. And it is too easy for women to be seen as complainers when questioning working practices and favouritism displayed to male counterparts.'

(Survey respondent)

'Transparent HR policy making and real accountability for those who fail to meet them.'

(Survey respondent)

Redefining and promoting security

5.50 Hand in hand with the need for industry change, was the need to promote the industry in different ways. Industry change and the promotion of industry to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce were viewed as interdependent factors requiring each other for success.

5.51 Respondents suggested that work was needed to demonstrate industry change, the diverse range of career options and the rewards of a career in security. It was noted that a better understanding of what security is now, would encourage more women, and more broadly, a more diverse population, to see a career in security as suitable, and would also challenge the views of those who think women do not belong in security because of the perception of physical danger. Some examples included:

'The main thing (in the US) is to change the perception of security from something that requires an enforcement background to a business supporting profession. The image of security is of large men with ear pieces. We need to do more to make it accessible to non-enforcement people.'

(Survey respondent)

'I think it needs to be made clear that we are not 'bouncers' and security has changed a lot in the last 20 years.'

(Interviewee 17, Officer, UK)

‘People think of bodyguards and technicians and system installers and that would not be of interest to me, security can be different and the general public view is narrow.’

(Interviewee 18, Scandinavia)

‘We need to do a better job as a profession in reaching out and get away from gates and guns mentality and show there are other opportunities in our sector which don’t require you to be a six foot guy, the intellectual side so physical presence is not the be all and end all. Women in uniform are normally in shown in adverts but there is so much we can do that is behind the scenes that is relevant.’

(Interviewee 20, Consultant, US)

‘For us to breakdown the perception that roles in the security sector are more suited to men. I work in management but would love to see more female candidates when we advertise vacancies’.

(Survey respondent)

- 5.52 The respondents felt that the positive aspects of a career in security were not well understood, and a useful avenue for potential promotion:

‘Change the perception that security is a profession without much future and for people without much aspiration or capacity to progress.’

(Survey respondent)

‘More awareness of the opportunities within security. Before entering security, many people I’ve spoken with were under the impression that it is a blue-collar industry with most employees serving as security patrol officers, rather than strategic and critical functions.’

(Survey respondent)

‘The importance, that they can make a difference.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Highlighting how it’s a job with flexible hours allowing it to be applicable to women looking to start a family’.

(Survey respondent)

Promoting security to young people

- 5.53 The importance of working with education providers to promote security roles as a career option to young people was highlighted. It was noted that not enough young people and particularly women are aware of the roles available within security. For example:

Well I think, things like going in to schools to speak to 14/15 years olds thinking about what they may want to do, going in to that situation and saying yes you can be a female in this industry – schools, universities, colleges. And job centres – with female managers of security

companies – yes we recruit females, yes we support females, there's no discrimination here. That would be a massive help to get females in the industry.

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

Needs to be more encouragement at colleges, more programs to allow them to engage, such as security management courses and not just criminal justice and can they do corporate roles. Or emergency management at community level. I am talking about encouraging women to do that, so being proactive as information is provided, are they showing women in those roles? These are things you can aspire to be. ASIS could do this and co-ordinate and work with academic providers to encourage women to get into security.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

'Senior level females as role models to encourage women considering the profession on panels, university guest lecturers etc.'

(Survey respondent)

'Early education about the variety of opportunities from intel through to more physical security roles.'

(Survey respondent)

'More awareness in academic settings, case-studies, feature articles of successful women in the industry to show the clear path to success.'

(Survey respondent)

'We need to reach out to young professionals while still in college and make it clear to them that security is a good, viable profession with opportunities, growth, and a supportive future (men AND women) ... This industry is aging fast.'

(Survey respondent)

'Programs to entice women from schools, colleges, universities and any current career into the security market, that have a quarterly/yearly achievement program to develop women in security.'

(Survey respondent)

Raising awareness of female success

- 5.54 There was also thought to be a need to increase the visibility of women in security and more generally market their success in the media to change the perception of security as a male role. Respondents felt this could be achieved particularly through highlighting female leaders, the careers of women working in a variety of roles/sectors, and more generally, women's success in the industry. It was thought this would attract more women to the industry and help demonstrate that women can progress:

'When women see other women doing the job then they will think, "hey, I want to do that too".'

(Survey respondent)

'Seeing more women succeed and then speak would encourage more women to apply.'

(Survey respondent)

'I think we must make our jobs more visible for women and overcome the idea of an old boys network.'

(Survey respondent)

'Until we are actually seen doing the job and heard of doing a good job and its been reported and all the rest of it, it will always be a male dominated place except for the minor roles and then it may be who you know rather than what you know.'

(Interviewee 9, Officer, UK)

'Just an increased presence. Quite a few people when I told them I was going into security they laughed and scoffed because they said I was not a big burly man. Increased representation of all women in the field of all shapes and sizes is needed. Increased presence is important because it is hard to break that stereotype that is in the media and companies as well. Media plays a big part as well.'

(Interviewee 14, Officer, UK)

'I would love more women to be managers and supervisors in high up roles in security, as my 'higher ups' are all male. Hiring and promoting more women in higher positions so that we can look up to someone, and it also means that we can consult someone female on issues such as being disrespected by sexist members of the public, without feeling ashamed that the male members of staff will not take it seriously.'

(Interviewee 17, Officer, UK)

'Candidates need to be able to see themselves working in that field, which requires seeing more women actively engaged at the highest levels.'

(Survey respondent)

'It is very sad for me to see, that in any conference, meetings of the sector usually only 10% are women. It is very important to invite more women as participants and speakers to public events and companies to understand diversity is key and hire more women in security roles.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.55 Other responses included the potential benefits of women in security award schemes to celebrate success, open days, providing the opportunity to talk to women within the industry, the importance of women promoting the career to other women, and the need to provide case studies to demonstrate how the sector has benefits for different groups of female employees.

Recruitment practices

- 5.56 Many of the respondents talked about the need to improve recruitment processes in the industry. Respondents noted that in job adverts and job descriptions, pictures and wording are often geared towards males, and progress towards removing gender bias in advertising in other industries was missing in the security sector.
- 5.57 It was suggested that very initial progress could be made by at least ensuring that wording is not discriminatory (e.g. referring to 'he'), but further, that much more could be done to ensure security roles appeal to women, such as focusing on the range of skills that security requires and re-thinking job titles and the masculine nature of the language used. Some examples here included:

'Adverts and role specifications which have terminology that will appeal to men, women and non-binary individuals, rather than the focus on what attracts a man to a role.'

(Survey respondent)

'Language in job postings often seems very male centric and focused (i.e. that the role would be more ideal for a male based on the 'need and requirements').'

(Survey respondent)

'Security is changing more into facilities departments which makes it more attractive and appealing - don't call them security officers as this is very much a male dominated name/ job role.'

(Survey respondent)

'I think a lot of the pictures you see – adverts on websites will be pictures of men in suits or things like that and people have to be mindful when designing company websites. If I'm looking at jobs I'll always look at the website. It shouldn't always be happy shiny 23 year olds, there should be a fair representation of the workforce, otherwise it will get people thinking they can't work there. Men in suits is off-putting to women. Women are off-putting to men. Doesn't matter what you've written if the graphics don't support a varied workforce – without knowing it. The thoughts are there without us knowing – almost conditioning applicants not to apply – we should be saying everyone is welcome. But perhaps some are doing it on purpose.'

(Interviewee 7, Manager, UK)

'I do believe the SIA need to encourage more women in to the industry. Social media is the biggest things. I think just using gender-neutral pronouns. You see – him, his in job adverts and it is very off putting. The term 'doorman'

should be door person. How they word things could be a lot better.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

5.58 Further, it was suggested that advertising locations should be diversified in order that more women are exposed to adverts looking for security personnel.

5.59 The respondents also talked about other practices that would create a more level playing field for women, such as the need to recruit externally rather than internally, ensure recruitment was not focused on law enforcement or military backgrounds, the need to adopt a flexible approach in regards to employing those without recent history of paid employment, the use of transparent recruitment processes, and those that avoided discrimination based on gender e.g. the use of 'blind' CVs:

'Recruitment not focusing on law enforcement or military background.'

(Survey respondent)

'To put opportunities out in public rather than taking people just internally.'

(Survey respondent)

'Flexible with women who have been unemployed for more than 6 months to look after their children and cannot provide evidence of income due to being financially supported by their partner.'

(Survey respondent)

'Open-minded hiring managers, blind CVs.'

(Survey respondent)

'Transparent recruitment and consideration for modernizing the thought process on diversity within professional networks and associations. Essentially, the market is extremely competitive and male dominated.'

(Survey respondent)

'Leadership that encourages women and opens equal opportunities to the best candidate, not just those that they envision will be successful in the role.'

(Survey respondent)

'Equal opportunity and scoring criteria when applying for roles.'

(Survey respondent)

'Not for women but across every facet of diversity. We write stuff down on paper. I see not enough going in to trying a bit harder to find a few candidates who might not be the first résumé that pops up – its very easy to find a qualified male white candidate. They fit, great choice, fine, but did you take an extra 15 minutes to read the résumé of a person who might be an amazing fit that didn't have 20 years in the marines – that's where we fall down on diversity, not looking for people who do other

things. We cannot get young people in the industry. We [seem to] chase diversity out – we’re doing a poor job of embracing the next generation. Youth outreach to everyone – is more than focusing on females. Get young people in and they will do the rest.’

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

‘Equal attitude from the hiring manager that woman can be effective security guards, same as men.’

(Survey respondent)

Career progression

5.60 Some of the responses concerned the need for more open and transparent processes within the industry in regards to career progression. There was also a strong theme in regards to the need for industry to provide more flexible career options to encourage women to enter the sector and greater clarity of opportunities and the path to follow to be able to progress. Some illustrative examples include:

‘A level advancement field - being offered the same level of advancement as men.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Fair evidenced-based promotions where personalities, sex and race are removed from the application.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Needs to be more opportunity for advancement, not just the boys club.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Clear expectations of role and objectives, less vague and easier to show good performance.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Clear career path and visible promotion options (same as for men).’

(Survey respondent)

‘Explain the advance[ment] ladder.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Make us feel supported and heard. Invest in our development and support us going to summits. These opportunities continue to be given to males’.

(Survey respondent)

Addressing working patterns

5.61 As noted above, while many felt that the difficulties of shift work and long hours were a reality of the sector, a number highlighted that there were still things that could be done to improve this, which would benefit all but particularly female parents and caregivers. For example working with clients to offer shorter shifts and consistent (rather than alternating) working times:

'I definitely think we need to do more. The challenge we face is that clients want a certain level of cover and it is not often you will get clients to agree to more cover or split shifts. I think that is where our industry could really evolve in relation to working hours and wellbeing. I was literally working on a tender today where the client said they were open to us making proposal to have more flexible shift patterns such as 8 hours because their objective is to be more inclusive and they know shift work is not as inclusive. If they are doing it, others will follow suit. For us, in terms of recruitment that would open the floodgates for that kind of diverse workforce. Different people from different backgrounds that will be a big change.'

(Interviewee 15, Director, UK)

'Organisations need to rethink the shift structure, is it necessary to rotate through the shifts or can you say your job is this time and someone else's was another time, a regular time? This would be better perhaps which might help women and may be better for people's bodies.'

[Interviewee 19, Consultant, US]

'If they've got kids I will look at adjusted shift patterns to help them and would have them working through us set days, only mornings whatever, because I'd rather have that good employee, than a worse one that's free all the time. That's for everyone though – for example we work a schedule for one man who looks after an elderly parent.'

[Interviewee 7, Manager, UK]

'Find a way to instil in corporations / organizations the need for flexibility in the industry to allow for females to be able to manage personal as well as professional needs as the security industry is a 24/7 role. Many females do not want to impact their family life for such a demanding career unless there is balance and a meaningful / mutual benefit.'

(Survey respondent)

'Fair wages, flexible working hours, benefits for family leave.'

(Survey respondent)

'Family friendly hours, possibly by offering split shifts.'

(Survey respondent)

'Shorter shift patterns for shift workers and shorter working weeks away from 50 & 60hrs when a Monday to Friday role'

(Survey respondent)

Individual drive

- 5.62 While the main emphasis of responses concerned the need for industry or organisational change to encourage women into the security sector, and ensure a level playing field where they could succeed, respondents also reflected on the action they had taken to overcome barriers.
- 5.63 On an individual level it was noted to be important for women to take action towards their own success. Aside from the obvious need to gain the relevant skills and experience required, suggestions included that women needed to set themselves goals, make themselves heard, have confidence in themselves and learn to sell themselves. For example:

'Have a plan of where you are and where you want to go and don't be frightened of selling yourself. As women we are not so ballsy – to say I'd be good at that. Be prepared to go head to head with other people that will be selling themselves. Develop those skills that are going to represent yourself as best you can. Sometimes you have to go in there and show off, you have to compete on that playing field. Don't be frightened to blow your own trumpet. If you don't someone else will push you out of the way.'

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

'I think the biggest thing in this industry is being ballsy – if you are female you've got to be able to speak your mind otherwise you will get trodden on. You have to have confidence to say this is how it needs to be done and stand up for yourself. They just need to be heard.'

(Interviewee 5, Manager, UK)

'One absolutely key is pursue education and take classes, now for a women it is more let's say an expectation that she should have this, for men it is perhaps less there. I think it is because of the good old boy network, I experienced that in my organisation, but this is changing.'

(Interviewee 19, Consultant, US)

- 5.64 The nature of some of these responses illustrated not just the skills needed to do well in the industry but the skills required to overcome the additional barriers and hurdles that women currently faced in the field. For example, the following responses describes how women need to prove they belong in the industry, and must be prepared to stand strong in response to intimidation:

'Be strong and don't take no for an answer. They will try to intimidate you and even question your intelligence. Listen to podcast, read, watch YouTube video, take a class. Do whatever it takes to show them you belong there and earned it.'

(Survey respondent)

'Be strong, cope with male attitude, self confidence (not being a sensitive fragile person, you need to stand up against the male culture).'

(Survey respondent)

'Don't be intimidated by loud opinionated peers.'

(Survey respondent)

'Personal drive, ambition, responsibility... the time (in the US - I do not know about other places) is right now for women to step up and OWN "Women in Security"... we can't wait for it to be handed to us.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.65 A significant factor, mentioned frequently by respondents was *confidence*, the need for confidence, factors to enable women's confidence, and a feeling that women lacked confidence compared to their equally competent male colleagues and that this prevented them from progressing and achieving their potential in the field:

'More confidence. The women I know in security do an excellent job but are less confident about their abilities than their male counterparts.'

(survey respondent)

'There's an old saying that if a woman looks at her CV and a job posting, she thinks "I can do that but I can't do 30% of that" so she doesn't apply. But a man looks and thinks "I can do 30% of that but the rest I can't but I can fake it" and applies -- that confidence and go-getter male attitude. I have experienced that a lot with myself and with other people I have had in my team. So I think that in terms of tips, you definitely have to stay true to yourself and be confident and independent and, you know, set a good example as a leader if you're going to develop in any industry.'

(Interviewee 15, Director, UK)

'Never ever look for that 100% box – if women are looking for a new job and don't tick every box they think they can't do it. I say if you can do half of it, throw your hat in the ring – know you can learn things on the fly.'

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

'I recently had an interview for an award nomination and she said do you know who nominated you – I said I nominated myself because we need to talk about the good work we have done. This is what I've achieved – I'm very good at walking in and saying this is me.'

(Interviewee 7, Manager, UK)

- 5.66 Some of the respondents talked about the importance of good support in order that women could develop their confidence to succeed:

'It's mainly due to the support of my company that I feel able to say I'm good at this and to share it with people.'

Then again – that’s slowly and surely changing in society that women are allowed to speak.’

(Interviewee 7, Manager, UK)

‘Openness of the industry, to show support and give the confidence that Females in security are seen as equal.’

(Survey respondent)

‘I think there need to be more company policies in place to stop bullying of women or belittling of women, when women are confident in there abilities they will naturally succeed.

(Survey respondent)

‘Given the chance to succeed. Given more responsibility and the chance to manager or supervise others.’

(Survey respondent)

‘Women in general are taught to defer, taught by every cultural thing we are steeped in, sit back, be quiet, let other people take the spotlight. If we take the spotlight we are thought badly of. And we are terrified of feeling stupid. Of course sometimes you still need a male to repeat it [an idea] so that people actually listen.

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

Networking

5.67 Some suggested making efforts to network was important as the relationships developed could help women to plot a career path and gain insights on how to achieve their goals. Some specifically noted the merits of participating in security associations with branches for women. Some illustrative examples include:

‘I think more PR and more interaction on social media. [At] ASIS UK, the Women in Security arm, it was about trying to get women to come along to events and share information and just start to network and talk to each other about the challenges we face and how to engage with more of them. The more of that that happens the better. It is really communication, engagement, getting the message out there. You know, networking. Just getting the info out there that security is more about a career path than a job you fell into.

(Interviewee 15, Director, UK)

‘Really making those connections with other females in the industry, we are really good at relying on each other and reaching out if we need help. Every woman at networks, conferences, events, you keep that relationship – don’t be afraid to ask for help – every single person I’ve met has been happy to help you out.’

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

'I think female networking within the industry is essential. It doesn't need to exclude men who can have some good input, but it needs to be a more supportive workplace and industry so there are people to talk to when issues arise that aren't in line management – female networking – maintaining. Being able to run ideas past peers in a safe environment where it won't come back to bite you. That needs to be female led.

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

Support from management

5.68 The importance of having support from management was highlighted. While this could take many guises, some specifically mentioned the importance that mentoring (by women and men) could hold for supporting women to develop their careers. This was felt to be particularly important for women due to the relative isolation of women in the workplace, and as such, lack of role models in regards to career ambitions:

'I've had the benefit of amazing mentors in the security industry – interestingly all of them male – they were clear early on that it didn't matter that I came from tech – I'm smart and really good at the topic – they said you are good at what you do, do it and do not worry. I had an amazing boss who has played the gender card on my behalf on several times – and a person in HR – do you realise this employee is being paid less than others on her team doing the same work. You know some people come in at a low grade and only get 10% and other people come straight in higher. I've had people go to bat for me. That taught me how to function with my team – I'll go to the mat for my team. They've showed me how to be a leader, not a man leader or a woman leader but 'a' leader. Mentors are really important, who will push you and make you recognise how awesome you are. If you don't have a person telling you how awesome you are, get one. Also understand that you are awesome.'

(Interviewee 2, Director, US)

Mentoring – giving people opportunities to develop without favouring females. A bit more support – because it is lots of men of a certain age. Also bringing younger people in – and they are being supported. Its important to include men in the process – I've worked for amazing men that were real champions of women in the workplace. Not just women bringing through women – but identifying talent and bring that through.'

(Interviewee 1, Manager, UK)

'It would be really good if there was a female mentorship programme through ASIS or some association that they

could reach out to a female in their area. One of the big life skills is public speaking and being able to communicate – that's where my success came. Even though I was mentored by males, they gave me the opportunity to speak – that is a big life skill that would help a lot of females. I don't necessarily think that a focus – just getting that message. It's great having emergency management, IT, physical resources skills but communication never seems to be a focus. A bigger focus – how do you communicate during a crisis, in front of a large group of senior management – whether follow up on KPI services, if an emergency situation where the response wasn't that great – how do you communicate that and implement better counter measures. That would help a lot of women.

I think if we educate them if there was a mistake – here's what I've put in place to ensure it doesn't happen again.'

(Interviewee 6, Director, Canada)

'The mentoring role I think is brilliant. I brought that up in one to one – I was told it wouldn't work. I was a bit disappointed really.'

(Interviewee 8, Supervisor, UK)

'Yeah I think it is education. I think it is mentorship. I think those of us who have been in the industry for a long time need to do even more than we are already doing to bring along the next generation.'

(Interviewee 13, Manager, US)

'Having support - I was lucky to have an incredible mentor, who I am still in touch with after many years.'

(Survey respondent)

'The industry is mostly old white men and they are afraid to mentor young women because of sexual misconduct allegations or how the relationship might look so women don't get mentored frequently, more men need to be brave and mentor these women.'

(Survey respondent)

'Strong female mentors who can provide actionable advice and leaders who provide development opportunities for females in security.'

(Survey respondent)

'A stronger and louder voice from those women already in higher managerial roles that continues to say, you too can do this.'

(Survey respondent)

- 5.69 The value of good support was in its ability to help women identify their strengths, provide encouragement and help women to build confidence in their own abilities.

- 5.70 A number of respondents noted the importance of males acting as champions for diversity in the security sector. Given the relatively low number of women in senior positions, it was thought that the support of male leaders to take action is very much needed:

'Again, you know us women leaders need to you know continue to bring along the next generation and we need more open-minded men at the top, if you will, to continue to demand diversity in the field.'

(Interviewee 13, Manager, US)

'Really funny, had this on a number of occasions – sometimes women struggle to have their voice heard around a table and then a man makes the same point and everyone stops and listens. A really interesting example – really senior woman – she got a supportive man and said, when I make a point can you replay it back to the room in order for me to be acknowledged. She says "I want to do abc" and he says "that's a great idea". I do find myself having to repeat my point in order to land it. So I think men can really help.'

(Informal feedback 22)

'Male champions make a huge difference. Male bosses I have had who actively recruit women and champion their causes (equal pay, mentoring, etc.) have attracted me to specific roles and retained me versus individuals who did not acknowledge female challenges in the industry or blatantly made remarks indicating they had to "protect" women in the security industry.'

(Survey respondent)

Summary of qualitative findings

- 5.71 The qualitative findings provide additional insights to the issues explored in the survey. They highlight the need for change in the industry and require a much greater focus on removing the barriers that women face. Crucially the findings illustrate an overarching point that many of the changes needed to attract and progress women, would in fact make careers in security more appealing to everyone.
- 5.72 The final section of the report considers the findings as a whole, providing a discussion of the key issues.

Section 6. Discussion

- 6.1 These findings need to be set in context. This study was not designed to, nor does it suggest that men and other genders don't face issues too. Inevitably some of the barriers covered here will also affect other genders. Neither does it suggest that inequalities are distinct to security and do not exist in other sectors.
- 6.2 The headline findings of this report suggest room for optimism, after all, over two-thirds (69%) had a positive experience of working in security and only 6% had had an explicitly negative experience. Interestingly over a third indicated that being a woman in security gives them an advantage in some ways (albeit about as many disagreed). Moreover, a number of interviewees highlighted how they had been treated as equals or had excellent male managers that supported them and mentored them. The significance of this work is in identifying why women remain underrepresented in security and what may help change this.
- 6.3 Many women have carved good careers and reflect on the professionalism and opportunities that a career in security provides. Indeed, the majority said that their attitude to security had changed since joining the sector, and more than twice as many said positively rather than negatively. The majority of women don't lack confidence in their abilities, nor for the most part do they feel they lack the physical capabilities required of the work; this is important and essentially rebuts these perceptions. But these positives cannot hide some real concerns expressed.
- 6.4 There was widespread experience of various forms of gender discrimination; sexism, bullying, receiving less support than men, less opportunities for promotion and less pay. On this latter point there was a general point that over half agreed with, that wages in the industry were low, and there was a specific point that two-fifths agreed with that women were paid less than men for doing the same job. Strikingly, while 41% felt that men and women in their place of work were equally likely to be promoted, 44% felt women were less likely, 3% said women were more likely than men. Almost half felt that they had to do more to earn respect.
- 6.5 Approaching two-thirds of respondents had experienced one or more instances of bullying, sexual harassment and violent male colleagues/managers or the public while working in a security role. A half had experienced bullying, nearly as many sexual harassment, and nearly a quarter some type of violence. Those so affected, unsurprisingly, were less likely to be positive about security work. The majority of women felt security was still an 'old boys club' with a lack of female role models.

- 6.6 Some women were impacted more. With a caution that the sample was self-selected it raised some pointers for consideration. For example, interviewees that had worked in other sectors previously, felt security was a step back in terms of equality. And in the survey those employed in-house generally fared better than those employed by security companies presumably, at least in part, because the male dominance is watered down as in-house operatives are part of a business with a focus other than security (even if the security team is male-dominated the wider workforce is likely more split). This though needs more research. Those in more senior roles generally fared better than more junior employees regarding the realities of the security sector that may be off putting (such as hours, pay, lack of permanent and full time jobs) but were more impacted by issues such as having to work harder to prove themselves, being paid less than men for the same work and experiencing an “old boys club”.
- 6.7 While some women had less experience of approaches to overcome potential barriers to women entering and progressing in the industry than others, notably, this was also low overall, despite a perception that they are effective. In short, relatively few of the steps that could be taken to address the issues are being taken.
- 6.8 This study was not designed to produce a ‘how to guide’ on improving the experiences of women in security work. Important though that is, and the findings here suggest it is crucial, that merits a different piece of work. That said some important points have emerged. By and large women do not want ‘special’ treatment or to be given advantages (although some acknowledged that positive discrimination had helped them). They generally call for approaches that will enable them to be treated the same. Many of the things that would help, are about being a good employer generally, and not about making special allowances just for women. Similarly, changing the perception of security, and dispelling the myths (e.g. that it demands a physical presence, that it is about action as opposed to people skills) is key to attracting the best recruits generally and not just women. Indeed, the ways in which the industry is portrayed, and the ways in which individuals are recruited and retained (e.g. building networks, encouraging promotions, setting clear agendas from the top regarding diversity generally) are big issues for the sector, and what this study has shown is that this is especially the case for women. There is a special call for more female role models, and crucially more awareness of them and their successes. It will be recalled that respondents noted that there are some good ways of overcoming barriers to recruiting and retaining women and providing them with good careers, flexible working hours and mentorship programmes were seen as positive but lacked support.
- 6.9 Security has much to offer, this has long been recognised. What is clear from this research is that greater recognition is needed of the barriers to successfully recruiting and supporting women, which appear particularly acute in the contracted sector. The remedies are not rocket

science, but they are important and they have not been given sufficient credence so far, not by enough people anyway, and therein rests the challenge.

Appendix 1 - Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to undertake the needs assessment. A summary of these is provided below.

Stage 1: Evidence Review

The review of relevant documentation focused on identifying the key barriers to women's progression in the security industry and designated ways of overcoming them.

To provide current data on this, we conducted a review of documentation using both broad and directed evidence searches using open source research tools and academic library databases. The evidence uncovered during these searches was quality assessed prior to inclusion in the review. High quality sources were then reviewed using a snowballing technique to expand the literature search to ensure that topics of interest were exhausted.

In addition to providing evidence concerning the aims of the research the literature review also informed the development of the survey and interview schedule used in the project fieldwork.

Stage 2: Fieldwork

In order to gain an understanding of the experiences of women in security as it relates to the aims of this research, an online survey was developed for dissemination. The survey included mainly quantitative questions – with multiple choice answer options and a small number of qualitative questions – inviting open feedback. The survey was disseminated to security press contacts and security associations, including women in security associations and the wording encouraged individuals to let their colleagues and contacts know about the research. The survey was open in the early part of 2019. A total of total 706 survey responses were received although not every respondent completed every question in the survey.

A sample of women from the above mentioned groups were also invited to take part in semi-structured research interviews. The approach was to identify a variety of individuals (i.e. with differing lengths of experience, differing roles, based in different countries) to help understand the experiences of women in security – both good and bad. The purpose was to explore the issues in more detail than is possible via an online survey. The questions were based on the information from the literature review and findings emerging from the survey responses. We formally interviewed 21 individuals (8 were in relatively 'junior' roles and 13 in more high ranking roles; 10 were UK based, 5 US, 2 Australia, 2 France, 1 Canada and 1 Scandinavian) and incorporated more informal feedback from a further 2 individuals (both high ranking, UK based individuals).

Stage 3: Data Analysis and Report Writing

The survey data was analysed using SPSS. Frequencies were run and statistical tests performed to determine whether relationships between variables were present (i.e. whether respondents with specific characteristics answered differently to others). Using a chi-squared test statistical significance was determined as p value less than .05.

Interview summaries were created for each interview. The researcher made detailed notes of the participants' responses and key quotes were transcribed verbatim. Through this process the data set was developed and data interpretation was initiated.

A framework analysis approach was used to analyse the data:

- Familiarisation with the data – achieved by reading the interview transcripts and survey responses.
- Identifying a thematic framework – noting key phrases and ideas arising and developing these into categories of findings.
- Indexing – sifting the data, highlighting and sorting illustrative responses and making comparisons within and between these.
- Charting – lifting the responses from their original context and re-arranging them under the newly-developed thematic content.
- Mapping and interpretation – building the relationships between the responses and the links between the data as a whole.

The findings of the analysis were organised and presented in a written report.

Ethics and Limitations

The project was assessed using Perpetuity Research's enhanced ethics protocol. These protocols are adapted from ethical guidelines from both the Social Research Association and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

While efforts were made to publicise the survey widely and encourage responses, the sample was self-recruited and no claims can be made about its overall representativeness of women in physical security. Additionally a concerted effort was made by the sponsor organisation to publicise the survey among its own colleagues. It is not known to what extent other individual companies may have advertised the survey to their staff and therefore to what extent the survey responses could over-represent those employed by a particular company. However, any impact of this possibility is likely to be minimal for two main reasons; i) the majority of questions focus on individuals' experiences of the sector generally (and not in relation to their current employer); ii) the sponsor organisation is a security services company with a number of facets to its work and therefore colleagues will be deployed to different types of sites and different types of security work and are therefore likely to vary in their experiences.

Appendix 2 - Additional Tables

Table 3: Summary of potential barriers to entry and advancement⁶⁵ (from the literature)

Potential barrier	Stage	
	Entry	Advancement
Lack of role models	✓	✓
Lack of mentors		✓
Limited representation of women in leadership positions		✓
Lack of participation of women in decision-making		✓
Family-unfriendly working environments	✓	✓
Mid-career conflict		✓
Unequal growth opportunities compared to men		✓
Perception that industry professionals are predominantly male and ex-military	✓	
Gender pay gap	✓	✓
Prevalence of bullying, sexual harassment, and abuse within security sector institutions	✓	✓
Traditional and cultural beliefs and practices	✓	
Formal, legal barriers	✓	
Being Stereotyped	✓	✓
Imposter Syndrome		✓
Lack of respect from male peers		✓
Posts created and adjusted to male professions	✓	✓
Lack of organisations ensuring women's rights in the security sector	✓	✓
Lack of awareness about career opportunities	✓	

Table 4: Summary of Mechanisms to Overcome Barriers (from the literature)

Mechanisms	Examples (where relevant)
Mentorship programmes	
Leadership programmes	
Fellowship programmes	

⁶⁵ The table also indicates whether the barrier is most often cited in reference to entry or advancement, highlighting that most often both are impacted.

Making security services more accessible to women:	Adopt family-friendly practices for all
	Flexible Workplace Schedules (technology can help with this)
	A reorientation towards outputs (deliverables), as opposed to inputs (time spend in the office)
	Program to Support Returnees
Bold Structural Solutions	Increasing diversity as a senior management priority
	Executive Committee talent strategy to lead on increasing of diversity
	Dedicated funding and staffing for gender issues (e.g. an equality unit)
	Public commitment to gender equality
	Develop a code of conduct, policies, and procedures that reflects gender equality.
	Engage in strategic planning with specialised gender institutions and women's non-governmental organisations.
	Encourage men and women to take parental leave
	Amplify women's voices in decision making
	Address the promotion and pay gap
	Hiring practices that reach professional women's audiences
	Provide regular (mandatory) staff training on gender issues
	Streamline the process for reporting, investigating, and responding to sexual harassment, discrimination, and gender-related
	Using gender-sensitive language and perspectives in all annual reporting practices
	Only attend or speak at conferences and events that include female panellists and speakers
Profound underlying cultural change:	Challenging stereotypes and perceptions
External co-operative relationships with government and non-governmental organisations	Assisting in the development of legislation
	Coordinating with a specialised national body for gender equality
	Including women's rights organisations in a welfare capacity

Consider developing career outreach programmes for primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Table 5. Countries where respondents work or most frequently work if they work in more than one country

Country of most Frequent Work	Number of respondents	Percentage of total respondents
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	379	53.7
United States of America	63	8.9
Canada	49	6.9
Belgium	48	6.8
Ireland	16	2.3
Australia	11	1.6
Mexico	9	1.3
Germany	8	1.1
India	8	1.1
Nigeria	8	1.1
Brazil	7	1
France	7	1
Singapore	5	0.7
South Africa	5	0.7
Netherlands	4	0.6
Albania	3	0.4
China	3	0.4
Kenya	3	0.4
Italy	2	0.3
Tunisia	2	0.3
United Arab Emirates	2	0.3
Andorra	1	0.1
Armenia	1	0.1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	0.1
Bulgaria	1	0.1
Colombia	1	0.1
Costa Rica	1	0.1
Cyprus	1	0.1
Hungary	1	0.1
Pakistan	1	0.1
Peru	1	0.1
Poland	1	0.1
Romania	1	0.1
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1	0.1

South Sudan	1	0.1
Sweden	1	0.1
Turkey	1	0.1
Uganda	1	0.1
Zimbabwe	1	0.1
Not Answered	46	6.5

Appendix 3 – Differing Experiences by Characteristics – with figures

By type of employment

There was a noteworthy difference between those respondents working 'in-house' (i.e. employed directly by an organisation such as a bank, university, hospital etc.) and those 'contracted' (i.e. employed by a security company and contracted to work at/with a site or number of sites).

There were a number of ways in which experiences appeared to be less positive for contracted than for in-house respondents. As noted above, in-house respondents more commonly had an improved perception of the industry than when they first started, compared with contracted respondents. But further, contracted respondents were more likely to agree that wages are low (66%) than in-house respondents (44%); and indeed more contracted respondents (45%) felt that they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties (compared with 29% of in-house respondents).

Contracted respondents more commonly agreed that many security roles are not permanent (56% of contracted compared with 37% of in-house); and more commonly disagreed that plenty of security roles are full-time (35% of contracted compared with 14% of in-house); and less commonly agreed that work in the security industry is attractive (44%) than in-house respondents (63%).

A lower proportion of contracted respondents reported they had advanced in their career (56%) than in-house respondents (71%), and a greater proportion of those that are contracted (30%) had experienced violence than in-house respondents (19%).

For all of the potential approaches to overcoming barriers explored, more in-house respondents had experienced these than contracted respondents (depending on the approach the difference between the two types of employment varied from 12% to 31%).

Contracted respondents were also less likely to view some of the approaches as effective:

- Flexible working hours (74% of contracted respondents viewed this as effective compared with 88% of in-house respondents)
- Support for women to author papers and speak on conference panels (58% of contracted respondents viewed this as effective compared with 79% of in-house respondents)
- Events around understanding women's unique experience in the sector (64% of contracted respondents viewed this as effective compared with 80% of in-house respondents)
- Talks or information given out that highlight security as a career option for women (70% of contracted respondents viewed this as effective compared with 84% of in-house respondents)

There were very few areas in which contracted respondents had a more positive experience than in-house – however 70% of in-house operatives viewed security as an “old boys club” compared with 52% of contracted respondents; and less in-house respondents (42%) agreed that women in security are in high demand than did contracted respondents (56%).

By role

Similarly, there were a number of ways in which the experiences of those operating at a more ‘junior’ level were different to those operating in higher level roles.

More commonly, ‘negatives’ in relation to the industry were experienced by those at a more junior level. The respondents at ‘security officer’ level and ‘security supervisor’ level less commonly agreed that work in the security industry is attractive (41% and 44% respectively) than those working at a higher level (which varied between 47% and 87%).

Respondents at ‘security officer’ level (68%) and security supervisor level (77%) more commonly agreed that wages are comparatively low within the security industry (for those working at a higher-level agreement varied between 27% and 60%).

Respondents at ‘security officer’ level (34%) and security supervisor level (23%) also less commonly agreed that plenty of roles in security are full time (for those working at a higher-level agreement varied between 60% and 80%).

Further, respondents at ‘security officer’ level (57%) and security supervisor level (66%) more commonly agreed that security roles are not permanent (for those working at a higher-level agreement varied between 32% and 47%).

A greater proportion of respondents at ‘security supervisor’ level reported experiencing violence from male colleagues/managers or the public while working in a security role (47%) than of any other level of work (this was followed by ‘security officers’ at 30% and then by higher levels of work which varied between 9% and 26%).

For a number of the potential approaches to overcoming barriers explored within the survey, more respondents in higher level roles had experienced these than those in more ‘junior’ level roles:

- Support for women to author papers and speak on conference panels - 8% of ‘security officer’ respondents and 10% of ‘security supervisor’ respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 38% to 69%.
- Mentorship programmes - 17% of ‘security officer’ respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 30% to 69%.
- Women leadership programmes - 5% of ‘security officer’ respondents and 8% of ‘security supervisor’ respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 23% to 44%.

- Human resource policies to increase the representation of females in the workforce - 11% of 'security officer' respondents and 13% of 'security supervisor' respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 26% to 41%.
- Partnership with local non-governmental organisations, charities, or other third parties in regard to women's experience in the sector - 7% of 'security officer' respondents and 5% of 'security supervisor' respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 10% to 29%.
- Events around understanding women's unique experience in the sector - 13% of 'security officer' respondents and 7% of 'security supervisor' respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 30% to 55%.
- Family-friendly practices (e.g. shared maternity leave, return-ship support programmes) - 12% of 'security officer' respondents and 8% of 'security supervisor' respondents had experienced these – all other role levels varied from 21% to 54%.

It was apparent however that some issues had a greater impact on those respondents that were working at a higher level within security. A greater proportion of respondents working at higher levels indicated they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties – and this typically increased the higher the level of the role - 18% of those at 'security officer' level agreed while 66% of respondents at 'company director' level agreed they had been paid less for the same duties.

A greater proportion of those in higher level roles indicated that their experience of security is that it is an "old boys club". Agreement was lowest at 'security officer' level (40%) and highest among 'security consultants' (82%) and 'company directors' (78%).

A greater proportion of those in higher levels roles agreed that they had had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect. Agreement was lowest among 'security officer' respondents (51%) and highest among 'company directors' (88%).

By length of time working in security

It was notable that some experiences differed by the length of time the respondent had been working in the security industry. Where differences were apparent, on the whole it was commonly those working in the industry for longer who had experienced some of the less desirable characteristics.

That said it was notable that the overall perception of security was more commonly positive among those who had been working in the industry for the longest (over 20 years) (77%) than among those that had been working in the industry for less than a year (60%). This could in part be related to the correlation between length of time in security and experience of promotion/advancement (15% of those in the industry for less than a year had advanced increasing up to 90% of those in the industry for over 20 years).

Agreement with the statement that they had been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties was highest among respondents working in the industry for over 20 years (59% falling to 16% among those in the industry less than a year).

A greater proportion of those working in the industry for longer reported experiences of bullying and sexual harassment by male colleagues/managers or the public when at work. Experiences of bullying rises from 30% of those in the industry less than a year to 72% of those in the industry for over 20 years; and experiences of sexual harassment rises from 29% of those in the industry less than a year to 61% of those in the industry for over 20 years.

Those working in the industry for longer were more likely to agree that their experience is that it is an “old boys club” (79% of those in the industry over 20 years agreed decreasing to just over 40% of those in the industry less than a year and 1-3 years).

Those working in the industry for longer were more likely to agree that they have had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect (80% of those in the industry over 20 years agreed decreasing to 46% of those in the industry less than a year).

Those working in the industry for longer were more likely to agree that they have had to prove their capabilities while male colleagues are automatically viewed as capable (78% of those in the industry over 20 years agreed decreasing to 41% of those in the industry less than a year).

Unsurprisingly, typically those in the industry for longer were more familiar with the approaches for overcoming barriers explored, than those who were fairly new to the industry.

There were however a small number of aspects which were less favourable to those who were newer to the industry. Disagreement with the statement that plenty of security roles are full-time was lowest among those in the industry for over 20 years (16%) and highest among those in the industry less than a year (40%). And those working in the industry for longer were less likely to agree that they lack confidence in their capabilities (12% of those in the industry over 20 years agreed rising to 30% of those in the industry less than a year).

By experience of abuse

Those who reported experiencing one or more types of abuse covered by the survey (sexual harassment, bullying and violence) generally speaking were less likely to be positive about aspects of work in security compared with those that did not indicate they had experienced these types of abuse.

Not only had less of those who had experienced these types of abuse had a positive overall experience of the security industry (65%) than those who had not experienced these types of abuse (78%); they less commonly agreed that work in the security industry is attractive (50% of those who had experienced abuse compared with 58% of those who had not); they less commonly agreed

that the security industry is synonymous with professionalism (37% compared with 47%); and more commonly viewed the industry as male-centered (90% compared with 77%).

In terms of their experiences of the security industry, those who had experienced these types of abuse less commonly viewed security work as compatible with family life (28% agreed compared with 36% of those who had not experienced these types of abuse); and considerably more commonly felt that women are less likely to get the promotion when equally qualified and experienced men and women both apply for the same promotion (50% compared with 33%)

Other differences included that those who had experienced these types of abuse more commonly indicated:

- that they have been paid less than men when carrying out the same duties (46% agreed compared with 24%);
- they have been less involved in decision-making than male peers (51% agreed compared with 26%);
- they view security as an “old boys club” (67% agreed compared with 40%);
- they have received less opportunities to advance than male colleague (48% agreed compared with 20%);
- they have received less respect from peer than male colleagues (57% compared with 24%);
- they have had to work harder than male colleagues to earn respect (77% agreed compared with 38%);
- they have been treated different because they are a woman (52% compared with 25%);
- they have been made to feel as though they do not belong in security because of their gender (37% compared with 13%);
- they have had to prove their capabilities, while male colleagues are automatically viewed as capable (76% compared with 41%);
- they have been kept less informed than male colleagues about career opportunities that exist in security (35% compared with 17%).
- They have been adversely affected by inflexible working hours affecting their work/life balance (47% compared with 28%).

Finally, those who had experienced one or more of these types of abuse less commonly agreed that being a woman has not created any barriers while working in the security industry (22% compared with 46%).

About Perpetuity Research

Perpetuity Research is a leading research company with wide expertise in both quantitative and qualitative approaches. We have been extensively involved in evaluating 'what works' (and what does not). Our work has involved helping our clients to understand people's behaviours, perceptions and levels of awareness and in identifying important trends. Our mission statement is 'committed to making a difference', and much of our work has a practical application in terms of informing decision making and policy formulation.

We work closely with our clients. This includes businesses, national and local governments, associations and international organisations as well as charities and foundations. Our aim is to exceed their expectations and it speaks volumes that so many have chosen to work with us repeatedly over many years. We are passionate about our work and we would welcome the opportunity to work with you.

About the Authors

Charlotte Howell

Charlotte Howell joined Perpetuity in January 2009, and is currently the Research Manager – responsible for managing the delivery of research contracts, and our team of research staff. She also manages the Secured Environments scheme run by Perpetuity Research on behalf of Police CPI. Charlotte is an accomplished project manager with experience of working with a range of clients including businesses, associations, police forces, government organisations and charities. Charlotte's knowledge and experience spans the range of our areas of expertise – including crime prevention and community safety, security research, and the social aspects of health research. Charlotte is also actively involved in delivering fieldwork and has consulted with a range of individuals, including stakeholders (such as individuals from the police, local authorities, service commissioners and staff), offenders (both in prison and in the community) and clients accessing services (such as drug and alcohol treatment services, domestic abuse services and support services for sex workers). Charlotte is adept at quantitative analysis and has a wealth of experience analysing survey responses, client data and performance/outcomes data.

Prior to working for Perpetuity, Charlotte graduated from the University of the West of England with a first class LLB (Hons) in Law. Following this she received an MSc in Criminology from the University of Leicester. After graduating, Charlotte worked for the Leicester Criminal Justice Drugs Team, analysing and reporting on Class A drug misuse and treatment information, to maintain and improve performance.

Caitlyn McGeer

Caitlyn works as a Researcher, having joined Perpetuity Research after earning an MSc in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Oxford with distinction. During her MSc, Caitlyn focused on criminal justice monitoring and evaluation protocol, cultivating an expertise in quantitative platforms such as SPSS and GIS. Caitlyn is equally skilled in qualitative methodology: interview, ethnographic, and visual methods. Caitlyn is currently completing a DPhil in Criminology at the University of Oxford.

Caitlyn has extensive research experience in both domestic and international projects, specifically focusing on facilitating strategic public sector development and the establishment of the rule of law. Beyond academia, her professional background has centred on public-sector communications, risk management, and project development, coupled with advocacy and campaigning capacities. She is a communications specialist and an intuitive project manager.

Caitlyn has worked with community development initiatives in Ecuador, Ghana, and Guatemala.

Professor Martin Gill

Martin Gill is a criminologist and Director of Perpetuity Research which started life as a spin out company from the University of Leicester. He holds an honorary Chair at the University of Leicester. Martin has been actively involved in a range of studies relating to different aspects of business crime including, the causes of false burglar alarms, why fraudsters steal, the effectiveness of CCTV, the victims of identity fraud, how companies protect their brand image, the generators of illicit markets and stolen goods, to name but a few. Martin has been extensively involved with evaluation research and with the offender's perspective looking at how they target certain people and premises and aim to circumvent security measures. He has published 14 books including the second edition of the 'Handbook' of Security'. Martin is a Fellow of The Security Institute, a member of the Company of Security Professionals (and a Freeman of the City of London). He is a Trustee of the ASIS Foundation. In 2002 the ASIS Security Foundation made a 'citation for distinguished service' in 'recognition of his significant contribution to the security profession'. In 2009 he was one of the country's top 5 most quoted criminologists. In 2010 he was recognised by the BSIA with a special award for 'outstanding service to the security sector'. In 2015 and 2016 he was nominated and shortlisted for the Imbert Prize at the Association of Security Consultants and in the latter he won. In 2016 ASIS International awarded him a Presidential Order of Merit for distinguished service. In annual IFSEC listings he is regularly recorded as one of the world's most influential fire and security expert. In 2016 he was entered onto the Register of Chartered Security Professionals. Martin is the Founder of the Outstanding Security Performance Awards (the OSPAs) and Tackling Economic Crime Awards (the TECAs).

Josephine Ramm

Josephine is a highly adaptable social researcher with expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. During her career she has conducted research on behalf of a diverse range of organisations including the Department of Health, Youth Justice Board, Alcohol Education Research Council, fpa (formerly Family Planning Association) and various private clients including national financial institutions and prominent academics. Josephine holds a BSc in Psychology from the University of Exeter, an MSc in Health Psychology from the University of Sussex. Josephine has extensive research experience in recruiting and working with offenders.



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