



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

An investigation into the impact that being a police officer or police staff, in particular shift work, due to demand may be forced to fast and how this can affect them physically and mentally.

Student name - PC Natasha Sparick

Student number – 2222450

Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA) BSc (Hons)
Professional Policing Practice

Word Count: 6,172 (Not including 1000-word Research Proposal & 500-word Ethics Form)

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my partner, family and friends for their continued support and encouragement to complete this dissertation.

Declaration

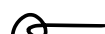
This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed:  

Date: 29/06/2026

Statement 1:

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BSc Professional Policing Practice.

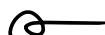
Signed:  

Date: 29/06/2026

Statement 2:

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

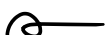
Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed:  

Date: 29/06/2026

Statement 3

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations

Signed:  

Date: 29/06/2026

Statement 4

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available on the university's IT system to those who have consent to use the system.

Signed:  

Date: 29/06/2026

Abstract

The aim of this dissertation was to understand from a very select group of people who work within the police, on how the demand of their working environment affects their eating habits and what this means for these workers. The researcher carried out critical analysis of current and relevant literature about public studies of intermitting fasting.

To understand the impact on police officers and police staff compared to other work environments, the researcher has conducted their own research using surveys and questionnaires - these allowed police officers and police staff the opportunity to leave personalised comments, which contributed to this project.

The results of this project support arguments for and arguments opposing the literature that was analysed. The themes found were, police officers who are personally impacted on the demand of the role struggled with their physical and mental health, whereas police staff who have planned breaks are less affected.

By the natural flow of the key milestones throughout this project, the researcher was able to explore the questions asked in relation to how forced intermitted fasting impacted police officers and police staff and the result of this research is supported by analysis of accessed literature.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction - Page 6

Chapter 2: Literature Review - Pages 7 - 12

Chapter 3: Methodology - Pages 13 - 15

Chapter 4: Analysis of results - Pages 16 – 18

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusion & Recommendations - Pages 19 - 21

Bibliography: Pages 22 - 25

Appendices: Pages 26 - 54

Appendix 1: Proposal Form – Pages 26 - 28

Appendix 2: Ethics Form – Pages 29 - 49

Appendix 3: Questionnaire, Results & Data – Pages 50 - 54

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Policing is a demanding environment that requires officers and police staff to work irregular hours, respond to unpredictable incidents, and manage high levels of physical and psychological stress. The unpredictable nature of operational demands significantly influences daily routines, particularly in relation to diet and nutrition.

The purpose of this research is to explore whether there are health factors associated with policing operational demands and to understand the results of the research, of how these demands may affect officer's ability to eat regularly and make healthy food choices during their working day.

By seeking to prove or disprove a relationship between operational policing requirements and dietary behaviours, this research aims to highlight potential impacts on officers and police staff's health and wellbeing, as well as identify areas where organisational support or changes could improve nutritional habits within the policing environment.

While there are many forms of literature supporting intermittent fasting by showing how this has health benefits and weight management in their persons of study, there are also plenty of studies opposing intermittent fasting, however neither of these look into persons having to deal with intermittent fasting without a plan or desire to take part in this style of diet habit, due to work place pressure.

This project was designed to ask only persons working within a policing setting, their eating habits and how this effects their ability to preform within their working day.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The researcher will be looking into the current research there is around intermittent fasting and comparing the pros and cons of this, based on the different roles between police officers and police staff. The objective for this research is to understand how forced intermittent fasting due to operational demands affects officers.

Personally, the researcher has always done shift work and there has always been set lunch breaks or rest periods within their working day. However, since working with Gwent Police, regardless of the structure of the shift, there are no set break times, compared to their previous shift work and sometimes altogether, there are no break periods at all during shifts.

Within their role of being a police officer, they have been experiencing forced intermittent fasting due to operational demand. This intermittent fasting has had a negative effect on them personally, as not only has their weight increased, but they find that they struggle to concentrate and function how they would normally, had they gotten sufficient fuel from their food.

This brings them to question how other officers and police staff are dealing with operational demand and how they are finding different solutions to manage their eating habits, whilst on shift.

Therefore, the main purpose for researching intermittent fasting, is to understand whether there are any benefits to fasting and if bringing in intermittent fasting full time during shifts, would benefit their body and mind. Also, understanding any impacting factors that would suggest a need for finding building blocks to bypass barriers of operational work, such as management protecting officers or police staff throughout their shift, to encourage a proper rest and refuel period, because intermittent fasting could hinder officers and police staff both physically and mentally.

Leading on to some of the pros of intermittent fasting and the role nutrition has on physical and cognitive performance, research by Mattson, Longo and Harvie (2017), shows that intermittent fasting may enhance cognitive function, because fasting increases the production of brain-derived neurotrophic factors, which are proteins that promote the growth and survival of brain cells. Additionally, the research around increased production of brain-derived neurotrophic factors from fasting, shows that it may also improve memory, as they are thought to protect against cognitive decline and can reduce the risk of developing neurodegenerative diseases.

There are some cases in research where people have reported enhanced focus during fasting periods, particularly in the morning before they have breakfast. This is because during fasting, the

body produces ketones from breaking down and using fat as an alternative energy source, instead of the body using glucose for energy. Studies show that intermittent fasting is often used as a tool for weight loss, due to the reduced calorie intake and the increased fat burning, because when the eating window is limited, the body eventually enters that state of fasting, where it encourages the breakdown of fats for energy use (Harvie and Howell, 2016). Ketone production has been shown to improve mental clarity, focus and cognitive function (Andriessen et al., 2023). Other studies have also found that fasting enhances alertness and cognitive performance in the short term and this is likely due to the body's increased release of adrenaline and other hormones (Gudden, Arias Vasquez and Bloemendaal, 2021).

There are other health benefits from intermittent fasting and further research by Mattson, Longo and Harvie (2017), suggests that intermittent fasting periods can help lower blood sugar levels, and this has been linked to improved insulin sensitivity, which is beneficial for preventing type 2 diabetes, by reducing the risk of insulin resistance. Zarn (2024), found that fasting can simulate a process called autophagy, which is where the body cleans out damaged cells and regenerates new ones. This has been associated with various health benefits, including improved longevity and disease prevention. Other studies have also found that intermittent fasting may lower markers of inflammation, which are linked to chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer (Mattson, Longo and Harvie, 2017).

Intermittent fasting may also affect digestive health, with reports of some individuals experiencing improvements in their digestion and a reduction in bloating, due to having fewer meals. However, some individuals have experienced issues such as constipation or acid reflux (Ramos, 2025).

Stephen (2017) has stated that one of the factors that cause acid reflux could be stress related, although policing on a positive day can be immensely stressful. For example, a simple journey along a straight road whilst having activated the police vehicles blue lights and sirens, changes the officers physiology to allow them to focus and become more aware of their surroundings, to keep themselves and members of public safe, due to the unpredictable manner others react to when hearing and seeing an emergency vehicle moving quickly. Even the most seasoned officer will go through this change, which causes the body stress, regardless of the time spent undertaking this event (Selhub, 2022). This stressful task demands mental strain, and this is also affected like acid reflux by the food the body is given. When meals are skipped, it is easy to need a quick fix which your body is craving, these usually being fatty and quick energy releasing foods. However, again this causes the body to burn the foods fast which leaves additional acid in the stomach, and this is when

the individual can suffer from acid reflex, often known as heart burn (NHS, 2023). Unfortunately, the National Health Service (NHS) suggests that individuals who suffer from heart burn (acid reflex), should eat smaller meals more often, which contradicts intermittent fasting.

Moving on to some of the cons of intermittent fasting and the role nutrition has on physical and cognitive performance, Berg (2023) found that whilst some people experience improved focus over time while intermittent fasting, others may find it challenging initially, as it can hinder their judgement, due to fatigue, headaches and irritability, which can negatively impact concentration. Other studies have found that prolonged intermittent fasting may affect certain hormones, especially in women which can cause disruption in menstrual cycles and may affect reproductive health, if fasting is not managed properly (Letts, 2024). Not only can extended periods of fasting cause changes to hormones, but Klempel et al (2012) found that prolonged fasting or low-calorie intake may result in muscle loss, especially if it is not combined with adequate protein intake or strength training - this can be a concern for individuals that are aiming to maintain muscle mass. With the demand on police officers, simply adding weight training to your program can be the difference of seeing family and missing out on core events while trying to combat the forced eating habits at work. Most studies are based on people working through the day and completing 8-hour shifts, therefore asking someone to spend more time in the gym to keep muscle mass could be achievable. Police officers, however, have no knowledge if their shift will finish on time and what toll the shift will take on them. Some shifts are extremely physically demanding and there simply is not enough in their tanks to add additional workouts.

Klempel et al (2012) also found that one of the most common side effects of intermittent fasting is increased hunger. This can lead to irritability and difficulty maintaining the fasting and schedule of it, because some people experience difficulties adapting to the eating windows, especially at the beginning stages. Furthermore, since intermittent fasting restricts eating to a shorter window, there may be a risk that some individuals may over-eat during their feeding periods. This can potentially offset the benefits of fasting and hinder weight loss or cause other digestive issues (Harvie and Howell, 2016). One of the first effects of overeating is digestive discomfort, where the stomach becomes over full and must stretch beyond its normal capacity. This can lead to abdominal pain due to bloating, feeling like your body is heavy, with the worst effect, especially for police officers, is the feeling of nausea due to the nature of the role (DeMarco, 2025). With having to drive or be a passenger while a vehicle is moving at speed, plus having to move around other vehicles on the road can create nausea by itself, so having the added feeling of discomfort from overeating is a recipe for

disaster. Another factor of overeating for some persons is weight gain, this combination of additional weight and stresses from the role, can work together to cause unhealthy weight gain. This in turn creates a circle where due to the unhealthy foods not giving your body fuel, added weight and stress can be the reason exercise feels unachievable and avoided completely. This stagnation and weight can make policing harder due to physical and mental strain and shame being placed on officers, which then in turn creates a new source of stress.

Other studies have also shown that if not carefully planned, intermittent fasting may lead to nutritional deficiencies. Reducing food intake to a limited timeframe may make it harder to meet the body's new nutritional needs, especially if one is not consuming a balanced diet during eating periods (Mattson, Longo and Harvie, 2017). One of the main ways intermittent fasting affects the body is by how the body requests energy. During fasting periods, the body must shift from using glucose as the main energy source to use stored glucose and once this store has been depleted the body will start to use its fat store. This metabolic shift, often referred to as "metabolic flexibility" (Rossello, 2025), can improve insulin resistance and sensitivity, which promotes fat loss. However, due to the persons eating windows being restricted, individuals must ensure they are paying serious attention to their nutritional intake and that each feeding period is sufficient, to meet daily nutritional requirements.

Although there are lots of studies on intermittent fasting in general, there are no studies on intermittent fasting within policing and whilst police officers and police staff are under such high pressures to perform work duties. These studies do not take into consideration the physicality of a police officer's role or the mental pressures of the police staff's roles. These studies also do not take into consideration the severity of the information that police officers are capturing and documenting as part of their daily interaction with the public, making sure that the right references and support are being put in place for victims of crime. Therefore, the aim of this project is to gain a clear understanding of what intermittent fasting is doing to officers on the ground and without judgement, seeing the quality of written work or the quality of physical aspects of the role being carried out, as well as the police staff in the control room, compared to when officers and police staff have been able to have their rest period and eat sufficient food, compared to those officers or police staff who have been unable to have a rest period or eat any food on shift. Within Gwent Police Federation (2025) policy, it states: "where an officer is on duty for a continuous period of 5 hours or more, they are entitled to a refreshment break, as far as exigencies of duty permit, however, this does not mean that refreshment breaks can be abused or ignored".

Home Office (2025) clearly shows, that regardless of the policies in place, there is a decline in police officers throughout the country. With this knowledge of the poor retention and the ever-aging police force who are still in service, the best laid plans will always fall short. This relates to the response time where the public are demanding attendance from officers, which unfortunately highlights how individual officers are suffering. The policy of an uninterrupted break away from your work has historically taken a back seat when more public statistics are being questioned. Unless a loved one is a police officer, the public do not see a missed meal as any importance to them and this is felt from the lack of management of the individual by their superiors, as their pressures are elsewhere and it is simply missed when an officer has not been supported and afforded the time to eat. Put plainly, there are not enough officers to achieve the demand, while caring for the wellbeing of the officers. This is also evident with social media shaming officers that are trying to eat whilst on the go, which may be in public view, post questioning who is being missed while the officer is eating and shaming the officer for what they are eating, without thinking a takeaway is the fastest option to take on food and get back to the demand, is the only way that the officer is going to be able to eat that day (Pepple, 2026).

The researcher also wanted to understand if all teams within a police force are suffering the same way as officers do, however it became clear from the research completed with the teams within Gwent Police Force, that police staff and other departments of policing are not seeing the same challenges. Call handlers or dispatch officers are crucial to the working structure of the police force. They are the first point of call and are subjected to every, if not more incidents than a police officer throughout their working day. Gormley (2020) has identified that these team members, regardless of being within the control room, have emotional and sometimes physical reactions to incidents they are involved with, hear or share with other colleagues. As officers struggle with staffing levels, so do the control room, however it has become clear that these teams are still granted breaks and have the stability for the colleague to plan and manage their food intake while at work. They are given breaks regardless of the staffing shortages or the demand which is unpredictable from day to day. With this support, police staff and other teams of policing are not being forced into missing meals or having demanding tasks placed upon them without relief.

To conclude, intermittent fasting offers several health benefits including weight loss, improved insulin sensitivity and enhanced cognitive function. However, it is not without drawbacks, such as potentially increased hunger, possible nutritional deficiencies and the risk of over-eating during the feeding windows. When it comes to mental focus, intermittent fasting can lead to an increased

clarity and alertness due to ketone production, but some individuals may need time to adjust to this before seeing benefits. With careful planning and a balanced approach, intermittent fasting can be a sustainable and effective dietary strategy, without compromising nutritional health.

However, previously these studies have only looked at persons working within a role with structure and routine, which would support this type of eating style. Officers who are not choosing this type of eating style are not prepared or educated to the best course of action to manage intake fluctuations and nutritional requirements, due to the unpredictability of the role. Even if an officer is on a fasting plan, the demand that is placed upon them physically stops them being able to eat, which can be detrimental to that person's physical and mental health.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter will explore and explain the definition of the methodology, whilst also explaining the rationale for the research that has been used. The focus will be on the two original questions - proving or disproving health factors associated with policing; and the operational demands of policing, on how officers and police staff are able to eat while on shift and how the demands of policing affect the type of food consumed by police officers and by police staff and why this type of food might be sought after.

There are many ways to gain information and data to better understand how police officers are being affected differently, compared to other police staff and other officers in different roles when it comes to the operational demand. This will look at how this affects their ability to take a break due to the demand they face and what type of foods the different teams bring to work because of this.

The decision was to use a questionnaire, as this allowed the researcher to gather a great sample of data, compared to trying to individually interview their target audience. It also allowed them to capture data without capturing personal data such as gender, body type and age (Adam and Cox, 2008).

The definition of a questionnaire is “a list of questions that several people are asked so the information can be collected about something” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019), which is exactly what the researcher planned to achieve.

The main advantage of using a questionnaire is its ability to reach a wider audience, as the researcher wished to capture the different perspectives of response officers, compared to specialist teams, whilst also gaining a perspective from police staff. Using a questionnaire is also very cost effective as the chosen format was to use Google forms and share the questionnaire via the Gwent Police internal server. It also allowed the audience to remain anonymous, as there could be fear of answering honestly, due to the concern that management will frown upon the findings as force policy is not always being followed (JAIN, 2023).

As the researcher was trying to capture responses from different teams using a questionnaire, this allowed them to keep the questions standardised throughout the teams, which highlighted any clear differences they experience from the pressure of demand (Lindemann, 2023). To take part in the questionnaire, participants had to physically click onto the link and there was an introduction page explaining clearly what the questionnaire was about. Throughout the questionnaire, if a participant did not wish to continue, they could exit the questionnaire, and no data would be collected. There

was always an option on Google forms where once a questionnaire had been completed, the participant could request for their answers to be removed, which would be done by Google ensure the participant wishes were adhered to correctly.

To manage the risk of gaining poor responses, the researcher only allowed persons who had access to the police force internet to participate. Another way the researcher vailed data was to add questions in relation to their working shift pattern. This allowed them to understand if the answers they had been given were a reflection on the role they stated they work. The main advantage the questionnaire had, was for valid responses in the style in question where a personalised open question with comment box, instead of a yes / no style helped participants to really think about the question and to give an answer truthfully (Ramos, 2024).

The questionnaire also had an open comment box, which allowed the participant to share any additional feedback if they wished, in relation to the questions as the questions may have encouraged them to think about their eating habits while on shift. The topic of food could open a wider discussion between colleagues, which could have a bounding effect when people understand they have something in common. The main aspect of thought with this subject, was for people to bound over a diet they are trying, or to share their experiences with how they have found a different diet to work for them. However, making sure there are support networks in place for anyone who is struggling with their eating habits or weight is important, as a disadvantage to people bounding over a common goal is when someone is not reaching their goals or struggling with the task. This could isolate people, make them self-conscious and lose confidence to eat around people or share their mealtimes with others (Cass, 2023). Sharing meals and eating habits have been said to encourage healthy eating habits and supporting each other helps maintain healthy outlooks and sharing how each other combat and overcome barriers within policing (De Neve, 2025).

Of course, with any research there are also drawbacks and one main drawback of using a questionnaire is a lack of participation. Regardless of how many people are within Gwent Police, the likelihood of people being exposed to the questionnaire was still very low. The researcher also wants to gain feedback without any personal emotion, which limited them using the relationships they have built with different departments of the force (Cleave, 2023).

Another drawback to using a questionnaire is response bias, which could occur with a few factors in play. One factor being how a question was written, which leads the participant to think and answer

in a way the author has intended. There could also be evidence with lack of questions that would explore someone's understanding or true opinions of the participants (The Decision Lab, 2024).

In conclusion, using a questionnaire allowed a wider audience to be reached, with no cost to the researcher and allowed them to span across all the departments that they wanted to sample and allowed anonymity to those who participated. Knowing the challenges that come with using questionnaires, extra efforts were made to have follow up questions, so that any that may not have been originally asked, allowed a fair response, instead of a biased response.

Chapter 4 - Analysis of Results

Using the questionnaire to gather insights from both police officers and police staff, about how they manage the nature of policing and its demand on the teams, the researcher was able to distribute this questionnaire easily across departments, which meant participants could respond anonymously without being personally approached. This encouraged more open and honest responses (Shyamson, 2023).

The researcher explored the questions asked to the participants and analysed patterns that were presented in the answers.

29 responses were received in total and it was encouraging to see engagement from different departments, beyond response policing.

Which department are you working within?

For the above question, most participants were response officers (14 out of 29,) but the researcher also received responses from one police staff member, one community support officer, and representatives from two specialist departments. Neighbourhood policing formed the second largest group with 8 participants and the researcher also gathered feedback from two road policing officers.

What is your shift pattern?

The responses to the above question represented a range of shift patterns, 20 participants worked a six on four off rota, five worked a standard Monday to Friday (09:00 – 17:00) rota and three worked a four-on-four off rota. One participant reported a different pattern altogether.

How long have you been in the force?

Six participants have over ten years of service, providing valuable insight into how experienced officers have adapted to the demands of policing, after the initial challenges of understanding the role. This perspective can be particularly useful for newer officers who may benefit from their strategies. It was also positive to see that this group (21% of responses), engaged with the university work. The largest proportion (48%) were officers in their first three years of service, like the researcher's own experience, which helped them better understand how those at the same stage as the researcher are managing operational pressure and how these demands influence their eating habits.

Do you bring lunch with you?

A significant proportion (45%) reported they bring food from home, while 52% said they opt for something quick and easy on the go, meanwhile 28% stated they purchased fast food during the shift and 21% buy ready meals to microwave.

What do you typically bring to work? Do you buy food at work? Where would you buy food? What typically would you choose to buy?

More than 60% of participants have stated they bring a packed lunch with them, with 28% stating they have hot food. A small amount of 10% have stated other which has not been expanded upon.

Do you think the food you eat at work affects your performance?

When asked if the food they eat at work affects their performance, 34% felt it had a negative impact and 21% said it had a positive impact. 24% reported no effects on their performance and another 21% were unsure if they were affected by the food they ate and if any impact was made to their performance.

Additionally, 34% stated they experienced increased fatigue or exhaustion when missing break, which is consistent with research suggesting that lack of food contributes to fatigue (Zeballos and Todd, 2020). The study states that the lack of food contributes to the body struggling to find the energy and then the body has no fuel to use when needed. The body sometimes stores fat and then protects this store and works against itself when there are requests for fuel.

A further 21% reported reduced concentration or decision-making ability and 21% noticed increased stress or frustration related to their intake of food. Spencer et al (2017) has stated a reduction in decision-making has been identified because of poor nutrition foods intake.

Within the last month, how often have you been able to take your break?

To gauge how often participants encounter these issues, a question was asked how frequently they missed breaks due to operational demand. Nearly half (45%) said they miss breaks frequently (a few times per week or per set), whilst 28% said they miss breaks almost every shift, and only 1% reported they consistently receive their full break each shift.

Are you aware of your entitlement to break throughout your working day?

It was very encouraging to know more than half (66%) of participants knew they were entitled to a break, however it transpired from a further question in relation to entitlement it was 55% of participants stating they did not know where to find the policy which states the entitlement.

Most of the forces policies are within the individual force policies however The College of Policing also set out standards for policing to meet along with The Police Federation. However, it is unclear where some policies are to be found and having multiple inputs can be confusing, especially for new recruits. The Police Federation are the ones who hold the policy for officers and police staff break entitlements and it can be unclear from onboard training what The Police Federation purpose to an individual is. The policy can be found on their website; however, it again can be unclear how to access this. The policy has a clear structure to time frames and expectations of officers and police staff entitlements to breaks and with the hours they work, stipulates how long the break should be Refreshment Breaks (2026).

What is your normal break time?

This question was answered honestly, 6 participants stated they have a set time of 30 minutes for break, whereas 23 participants stated they know they are supposed to have a break however do not always receive one. One participant has stated "Don't get breaks, always sent to a call when I want to eat/have any spare time. SLT have a big drive for response times, meaning our welfare is left to suffer to ensure we respond on time." Another stated "varies- can go all shift without taking a break due to demand from FCR" - The FCR (Force control room) being the dispatchers who allocate incidents to officers. An overwhelming thread stated that officers are eating when / if they have a spare moment and between being tasked by FCR. This pressure often causes people to eat extremely quickly in the worry they will have to leave the food, or due to the stress of waiting for the next radio transmission going (Team, 2024).

Chapter 5 – Findings, Conclusion & Recommendations

The purpose for this research was to find out if being forced to miss eating, while on shift due to operational demands, has an impact on officers and police staff's health.

There is an extensive amount of literature the researcher was able to access in relation to intermittent fasting; however, these were all in relation to persons planning the time and structure of the fasting. None explored what happens to a person's physical or mental health, along with no understanding of how lack of food impacts police officers and police staff in their high-pressure environment and the extreme responsibility these roles hold.

Based on the answers given by police officers and police staff via the questionnaire, clearly the demand upon officers causes them to rush or completely miss breaks. This has a knock-on effect with how they feel while on shift and it also showed how it has changed the food they consume to cope and accommodate this pressure the demand has caused them. Whereas the police staff who engaged with the questionnaire have shown they are still being supported to take their entitled break for the right amount of time, regardless of the demand across the force. Police staff are made up of call handlers (who take the initial 999 or 101 call) and dispatchers (who are assigned a district and are responsible for allocating police officers to incidents happening within that district). Both roles are under the same, if not more pressure than the officers themselves - this is due to officers only being able to attend one incident at a time, however the police staff (mainly dispatchers) have dealings with multiple incidents at one time. However, their departments are still managing to support the police staff in gaining their breaks within their shift time. There is also no pressure applied to them while they are on their break to return to work at any moment, or to complete their break faster than their allocated time.

Both police officers and police staff are struggling with their staffing levels. The researcher explored if this difference was simply due to the right staffing levels, however this is not the case, as both departments are suffering the same in respect to minimal staffing levels not being met.

With police staff stating they receive a break, they have not experienced any health problems in relation to food intake, and they have also stated they are more likely to plan their food and have something ready to eat or warm up during their shift.

Police officers on the other hand have stated they have frequently missed their breaks and are aware of detrimental health effects such as increased fatigue, reduced concentration and increased stress, along with reduced concentration or decision-making ability. All of these are detrimental to any job

role, however to a police officer this is especially dangerous for their safety and the safety of the public.

One participant has stated “when I have not been able to have a break or an opportunity to eat food, I become exhausted and less patient. I unconsciously limit my interactions with others, which when dealing with members of public or victims, is not offering the best service. Another example is due to exhaustion, my energy level dips which raises a risk to myself and my colleagues when in adverse situations.” Almost all participants have referred to how lack of food impairs their decision-making skills and there has been one participant stating, “Yes, extreme weight loss”, which could have a massive impact on their wellbeing and health.

At present there is nothing to suggest that any police force is aware this is a major problem or cause for concern. Therefore, there are no plans in place to address the serious issues all police officers are facing. When people’s lives are at risk, having high functioning and healthy police officers should be the priority and not lost in the pursuit of statics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from the honest answers from the participants, there is a clear impact on police officers physical and mental health, due to being forced to miss food on occasions due to operational demand, compared to police staff who participated within the research showing they are granted their breaks regardless of demand and therefore are not subject to any such physical or mental health issues due to any lack of food.

Existing research at the time of writing this paper was only in relation to persons choosing to participate in intermittent fasting and who have understood the complexity of keeping a routine and the extreme importance of balancing their meals, to incorporate the correct nutritional needs to function properly. Due to the nature of policing, no such routine could be achieved as it is never clear which shift police officers will be forced to miss the opportunity to eat.

The benefits of chosen fasting can outweigh the negatives, however these studies do not factor in the stressful nature of policing and the nature of the incidents police officers are subject to.

If having the opportunity to research this subject again, it would be interesting to see how dealing with traumatic incidents has an impact the body and what kind of demand this causes by needing additional fuel through food, compared to a person who has a less stressful role who is also fasting.

There will never be the ability to test the theory completely as there are no other jobs which would allow a good comparison to the stress and forced fasting like policing.

Recommendations

It's therefore recommended to policing across the country to look at the team around them, they are struggling, they are being left for hours without rest bite, and they are being overworked with no care for their wellbeing. Within Gwent Police they have a wellbeing team, however this team are for mental health concerns and have been advertised as such. It is not known whether this team could help support police officers or police staff if they are struggling with ongoing forced fasting due to demand. Others are quick to mention reporting these breaches of the break entitlement to The Police Federation, however the culture is such where it is expected to step forward from the crowd and point these matters out, only to have a target placed upon them for highlighting this issue.

The policy is there like in any other job in the United Kingdom and it is not on the individual to risk being the whistle blower - it is on management to want to stand up and support their teams and put their welfare above the statics. All officers are monitored by their radios and call signs to the time spent working at a single incident and how many incidents they attend within their shift. This is something senior officers can check and monitor.

Like other departments, it's recommended there be a system in place with each Sargent ensuring everyone on shift is cared for and supported to take rest bite from the work, which is arguably one of the hardest jobs to undertake. Of course a rota would not work in this role due to the nature of responding to unknown incidents, however there still is no excuse to team management knowing where your team is and what roles they have been completing throughout their shift and if they need relieving to take on food to fuel their body and minds, to keep doing the job to the best of their ability.

There are daily meetings with all departments heads where team numbers are shared and moving officers to support other departments is spoken about, however this meeting can also be where expectations of team wellbeing is highlighted, and reasonable targets are agreed upon due to the staffing levels. This could stop officers having so much pressure placed on them to skip / miss meals, as it seems the lack of officers is not being addressed and the work is simply being placed upon the officers who are still turning up on the day to serve the public.

Bibliography

Adam, A. and Cox, A. (2008). *Questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus groups Book Section*. [online] Available at: https://oro.open.ac.uk/11909/3/9780521870122c02_p17-34.pdf.

Andriessen, C., Doligkeit, D., Moonen-Kornips, E., Mensink, M., Hesselink, M.K.C., Hoeks, J. and Schrauwen, P. (2023). The impact of prolonged fasting on 24h energy metabolism and its 24h rhythmicity in healthy, lean males: A randomized cross-over trial. *Clinical Nutrition*, [online] 42(12), pp.2353–2362. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2023.10.010>.

Berg, D.E. (2025). *5 Causes of Intermittent Fasting Fatigue*. [online] Dr. Berg. Available at: <https://www.drberg.com/blog/the-5-reasons-you-get-tired-on-intermittent-fasting?nab=0> [Accessed 7 Jun. 2026].

Cambridge Dictionary (2019). *QUESTIONNAIRE | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary*. [online] Cambridge.org. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/questionnaire>.

Cass, K. (2023). *Self-Isolation to Self-Love: Relationships & Eating Disorders | ACUTE*. [online] ACUTE. Available at: <https://www.acute.org/resources/relationships-eating-disorders>.

Cleave, P. (2023). *Advantages of Questionnaires in Online Research*. [online] SmartSurvey. Available at: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/blog/advantages-of-questionnaires-in-online-research>.

De Neve, J.-E. (2025). *Sharing meals with others: How sharing meals supports happiness and social connections*. [online] Worldhappiness.report. Available at: <https://www.worldhappiness.report/ed/2025/sharing-meals-with-others-how-sharing-meals-supports-happiness-and-social-connections/>.

DeMarco, C. (2025). *What happens when you overeat?* [online] MD Anderson Cancer Center. Available at: <https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/what-happens-when-you-overeat.h00-159775656.html>.

Gormley, P. (2020). *A call for help*. [online] Available at: <https://assets-hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/uploads/a-call-for-help-police-contact-management-call-handling-control-rooms-2018-19.pdf>.

Gudden, J., Arias Vasquez, A. and Bloemendaal, M. (2021). The Effects of Intermittent Fasting on Brain and Cognitive Function. *Nutrients*, 13(9), p.3166. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13093166>.

Gwent Police Federation (2025). *Meal Breaks*. [online] www.polfed.org. Available at: <https://www.polfed.org/gwent/advice/faqs/meal-breaks/>.

Harvie, M.N. and Howell, T. (2016). Could Intermittent Energy Restriction and Intermittent Fasting Reduce Rates of Cancer in Obese, Overweight, and Normal-Weight Subjects? A Summary of Evidence. *Advances in nutrition (Bethesda, Md.)*, [online] 7(4), pp.690–705. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3945/an.115.011767>.

Home Office (2025). *Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2025*. [online] GOV.UK. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2025/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2025>.

Indhuja, L. (2026). *What is a Good Survey Response Rate | Improve Data | SurveySparrow*. [online] SurveySparrow. Available at: http://surveysparrow.com/blog/what-is-a-good-survey-response-rate-indeed-heres-the-answer-we-found/?_gl=1 [Accessed 23 Jun. 2026].

JAIN, D. (2023). *16 Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires + Examples*. [online] EDUCBA. Available at: <https://www.educba.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-questionnaires>.

Klempel, M.C., Kroeger, C.M., Bhutani, S., Trepanowski, J.F. and Varady, K.A. (2012). Intermittent fasting combined with calorie restriction is effective for weight loss and cardio-protection in obese women. *Nutrition Journal*, [online] 11(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/1475-2891-11-98>.

Letts, R. (2024). *Intermittent fasting for women*. [online] Nutritionist-resource.org.uk. Available at: <https://www.nutritionist-resource.org.uk/articles/intermittent-fasting-for-women>.

Lindemann, N. (2023). *12 Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires*. [online] Pointerpro. Available at: <http://pointerpro.com/blog/questionnaire-pros-and-cons/>.

Mattson, M.P., Longo, V.D. and Harvie, M. (2017). Impact of intermittent fasting on health and disease processes. *Ageing Research Reviews*, [online] 39(1), pp.46–58. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.arr.2016.10.005>.

NHS (2023). *Heartburn and acid reflux*. [online] NHS. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heartburn-and-acid-reflux/>.

Pepple, C. (2026). *Woman Shames Cop For Getting Lunch On Duty, So He Tells Her About His Day*. [online] Tapworthy Happenings. Available at: <https://taphaps.com/officer-andre-owen-lunch-duty-263/> [Accessed 23 Jun. 2026].

Ramos, M. (2025). *Common side effects of fasting*. [online] Diet Doctor. Available at: <https://www.dietdoctor.com/intermittent-fasting/side-effects-2>.

Ramos, T. (2024). *Open-Ended Questions*. [online] Cognitive Psychology News Journal. Available at: <https://journalofcognitivepsychology.com/open-ended-questions/>.

Refreshment Breaks (2026). *Refreshment Breaks*. [online] Polfed.org. Available at: <https://polfed.org/westmercia/advice-regs/refreshment-breaks/> [Accessed 25 Jun. 2026].

Rossello, J. (2025). *Metabolic Flexibility: What It Is and How to Improve It Effectively*. [online] Preventive Medicine Daily - Your source for the latest news on preventive medicine and well being. Available at: <https://www.preventivemedicinedaily.com/diseases-conditions/endocrine/metabolism/metabolic-flexibility-what-it-is-and-how-to-improve-it-effectively/> [Accessed 7 Jun. 2026].

Selhub, E. (2022). *Nutritional psychiatry: Your brain on food*. [online] Harvard Health Blog. Available at: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/nutritional-psychiatry-your-brain-on-food-201511168626>.

Shyamson, S. (2023). *7 easy ways to get honest answers on a survey | BlockSurvey*. [online] blocksurvey.io. Available at: <https://blocksurvey.io/research/easy-ways-to-get-honest-answers-on-a-survey>.

Spencer, S.J., Korosi, A., Layé, S., Shukitt-Hale, B. and Barrientos, R.M. (2017). Food for thought: how nutrition impacts cognition and emotion. *npj Science of Food*, [online] 1(7). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41538-017-0008-y>.

Stephen, L. (2017). *Acid reflux diet: foods to eat and avoid*. [online] Patient.info. Available at: <https://patient.info/features/digestive-health/diet-sheet-for-oesophageal-reflux>.

team, N. editorial (2024). *Fast Eating Psychology: Unraveling the Reasons Behind Rapid Consumption*. [online] NeuroLaunch.com. Available at: <https://neurolaunch.com/why-do-i-eat-so-fast-psychology/>.

The Decision Lab (2024). *Response Bias - Biases & Heuristics*. [online] The Decision Lab. Available at: <https://thedecisionlab.com/biases/response-bias>.

Zarn, D. (2024). *What is Autophagy? The Process, Causes and Signs*. [online] Harrison Healthcare. Available at: <https://harrisonhealthcare.ca/understanding-autophagy/>.

Zeballos, E. and Todd, J.E. (2020). The effects of skipping a meal on daily energy intake and diet quality. *Public Health Nutrition*, [online] 23(18), pp.1–10. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/s1368980020000683>.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposal Form



UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

Please complete the following research proposal and submit it to Turnitin.

Which project option are you taking? Please tick:

8,000 word project: ☒ x

OR

4,000 word project and presentation:

NAME: Natasha Sparick	STUDENT 2222450
DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: Policing on an empty stomach. The impact on intermittent fasting due to operational demand	
INTRODUCTION: I have personally struggled with my weight since joining the police force. I had believed that the physical nature of the job would lead to weight loss, but in my case, it has been the opposite. At first, I believe it was due to the long hours sitting in the vehicles traveling to and from jobs and on patrol. However, I previously working in a role that involved even more driving, and I never experienced issues managing my weight there. I considered whether shift work might be the cause but again I have always worked shift work thought my working life without similar challenges, therefor this explanation did not fit either. I tried to understand why I was struggling and was advised to keep a food diary. It quickly became	

clear that operational demands were causing me to regularly miss meals altogether. This not only affected my weight, but I had a noticeable impact on my mood and overall wellbeing.

I then started to speak with my colleagues about their eating habits and how they manage to find time to eat during shifts, I have also asked what type of food they brought with them to work. While attention is rightly given to mental health of officer, I believe both our mental and physical health are massively influenced by the fuel we provide our bodies. I also avoid drinking while on shift to prevent being unable to gain access to proper facilities as within the role sometimes it is impossible to gain access to proper facilities.

From what I've observed, little to no attention has been given to the connection between operational pressure and the tendency for officers to delay or completely skip meals entirely, it therefore be interesting to explore how unplanned fasting impacts our effectiveness and performance in the role.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

I would like to understand other officers' experience within the role and will be asking:

Are you able to take your breaks within your shift time?

What type of food do you consume in work and why?

Have you seen any changes in your weight due to work?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

There is extensive research on intermittent fasting. For instance, Johns Hopkins Medicine (2021) notes "with intermittent fasting, you only eat during a specific time. Fasting for certain hours each day or eating one meal a couple of days a week may have health benefits". However other research highlights potential downsides, "intermittent fasting may offer health benefits for some person, but it can also lead to greater hunger, headaches, fatigue and mood issues. It could also cause malnutrition if not done correctly" (Kubala, 2021)

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH –SURVEY METHOD:

I plan to gain access across the wider force, as I aim to collect data from more than one department as each department has different worktime and different work locations. This will allow me to explore whether eating habits differ between various roles, particularly among shift workers.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:

I hope to encourage participation from a broad range of departments. To achieve this, I will make the questionnaire available on the force intranet and seek the support from Sargen's of each departmental to promote participation and hopefully increase foot traffic to my questionnaire.

Within Gwent, there are approximately 2,000 officers and a similar amount police staff member. My goal is to achieve around 20% response rate of 10% officer and 10% police staff as some staff work the same shifts. This is of course something I'm not able to manage however I would like to represent both sides if possible.

ETHICAL ISSUES:

No personal details will be collected, however the questionnaire will prompt people to reflect and having a intrusive looking into their person habits and how it might be affecting their weight. To ensure support is available I will provide links and information about sister agencies who can offer support and guidance around nutrition and wellbeing for those how need.

TIME SCALE:

I will take 1 week to build a questionnaire I will leave the link open for 4 weeks, to allow enough time to see and partake in the questionnaire.

REFERENCE LIST:

Johns Hopkins Medicine (2021). *Intermittent fasting: What is it, and how does it work?* [online] Johns Hopkins Medicine. Available at: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/intermittent-fasting-what-is-it-and-how-does-it-work>.

Kubala, J. (2021). *9 Potential Intermittent Fasting Side Effects*. [online] Healthline. Available at: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/intermittent-fasting-side-effects>

Appendix 2: Ethics Form

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS

This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (<https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk>).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Natasha Sparick			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☒	Taught Postgraduate Student	☐	Postgraduate Research Student

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	BSc (Hons) Professional Police Practice
4	Campus:	Trinity Saint David
5	E-mail address:	2222450@student.uwtsd.ac.uk
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07977603196
For students:		
7	Student Number:	2222450
8	Programme of Study:	PCDA
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	

		Trinity Saint David
--	--	---------------------

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)	YES	☐	NO	☒
				Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	☐		
		Institute Research Committee	☐		
		Other (write in)	☐		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☐
3	<i>[List any other relevant documents here]</i>	☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution	
---	-------------	--

2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☐	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☐
7		Employed	YES	☐	NO	☐
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☐
9	Has permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Policing on an empty stomach (intermittent fasting due to operational demand)			
2	Proposed start date:	10/11/2025	Proposed end date:	02/06/2026	

	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the points below: <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> <i>Proposed Research Question</i> <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i>
3	Purpose of Research Activity The purpose of the research activity is to try to prove or disprove health factors, if any, in relation to policing operational demands and how this can affect how officers are able to eat and what type of food they eat within their working days. (this box should expand as you type)
4	Research Question How long have you been in the force? Which department you are working within? What is your shift pattern? Are you aware of your entitlement to a break throughout your working day? Within the last month how often have you been able to take a break within your shift? Do you bring lunch with you? What do you typically bring to work to eat? Do you buy food at work?

	Where would you buy food from? What typically would you choose to buy? Do you think the food you eat at work affects your performance? Do you think having to miss your break due to operational demands has an effect on you? (this box should expand as you type)
5	Aims of Research Activity To gain information relating on police officers and staff eating behaviours and how this could be connected to demand and explore professional options on fasting and its effect on the body. (this box should expand as you type)
6	Objectives of Research Activity To understand how forced intermittent fasting due to operational demands affect officers (this box should expand as you type)
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	

	I will look to gain information in the form of a questionnaire with space for participants to leave additional comments to each question if they feel they have more to offer. We have a force email list and an internal internet that every person working within the force can access, as I hope to gather more than a single departments' habits, so I can see if eating habits change between roles with shift workers. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	Gwent Police work force (this box should expand as you type)
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	There are ample sources within the UK to not need any outside of the UK (this box should expand as you type)

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☒
		YES	☐
11	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	YES	NO
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☐	☒
3	Use of focus groups?	☐	☒
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒

5	Use of video or audio recording?	☐	☒
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒
	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source		
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?		
10	How many participants are expected?	I hope to encourage participation from a broad range of departments. To achieve this, I will make the questionnaire available on the force intranet and seek the support from Sargen's of each departmental to promote participation and hopefully increase foot traffic to my questionnaire. Within Gwent, there are approximately 2,000 officers and a similar amount police staff member. My goal is to achieve around 20% response rate of 10% officer and 10% police staff as some staff

		work the same shifts. This is of course something I'm not able to manage however I would like to represent both sides if possible. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
11	Who will the participants be?	Officers and staff of Gwent Police <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
12	How will you identify the participants?	I do not need personal information, a person's shift patten will give a hint to which department they work within <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☒	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☐	☐	☒
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☐	☐	☒
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	Question 15 – consent will be given by fully completing the questions and pushing submit <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>			

	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	☐
		No	☒
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants: There will be no risk to any participants <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	How you will mitigate the risk to participants: An online questionnaire will be asked of participants which is not compulsory and completely voluntary <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		

	No personal details will be collected; however, the questionnaire will prompt people to reflect and have an intrusive look into their person habits and how it might be affecting their weight. To ensure support is available I will provide links and information about sister agencies who can offer support and guidance around nutrition and wellbeing for those how need. NHS website has support departments relating to weight Mind.org.uk are a charity that support persons with mental health <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator: Low risk as the information I will gain will not affect me <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Data Protection <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the University:</i> Ensuring research is from creditable sources There will be no personal data being collected. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	

	Risk to the environment: No environmental risk <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to environment:</i> <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
--	--	--

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	Unless personally requested, I would not look to provide any feedback. I will leave my contact details for any person who would like to gain information about my findings, as there are going to be no personal data collected my full findings should be appropriate to be shared.

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	It will be perceived consent, as to give feedback you will have to follow the link to participate. There will be information stating only completed forms by clicking submit any half-completed forms will not be sampled. It will also be made clear this is a voluntary activity. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	No personal data will be asked for and the completed questionnaires will be screened to make sure there are no personal details attached to them. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 “GDPR” and the Data Protection Act 2018 “DPA”)?	YES	NO
1	<i>“Personal data” means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person (‘data subject’). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one</i>	☐	X

	<i>or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.</i>		
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	☐	x
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4			
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☒	☐
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
10	“Cloud” storage or websites?	☒	☐

11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Within the police force there is an organisational website where I plan to post my questionnaire. This is a secure site and only persons within the Gwent policing force can access it and these persons are my target audience. I will be completing my research from my work computer which has security encryption software. I will be constructing my questionnaire with a credible site that adheres to GDPR guidance <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☐	☒
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☒	☐
20	Data archiving?	☒	☐
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	I will be using Google Forms as this is a credible site to build my questionnaire and this enables me to make every effort to comply with force and GDPR rules.		

	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Google Forms and me <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Only me <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	Google pride themselves on their data encryption and storage of data unless otherwise stated, is removed after six months after the trial date. <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	No <i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/			
1	Signature of applicant:	N Sparick	Date: 10/11/2025

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		Date:
3	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
5	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☐	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)

☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) <i>ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT</i>
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY	
Once complete, submit this form via the MyTSD Doctoral College Portal at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).	
RESEARCH STAFF ONLY	
All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.	
STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.	

Appendix 3: Questionnaire, Results / Data

31/03/2025, 12:42

Policing on an Empty Stomach

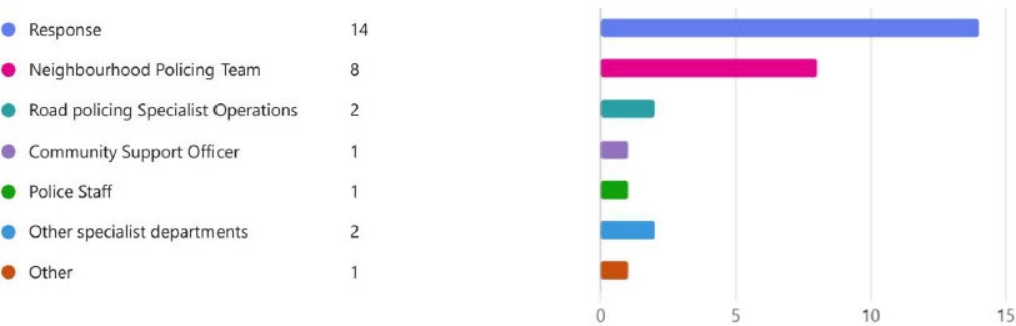
Responses Overview Active



1. How long have you been in the force?



2. Which department are you working within?

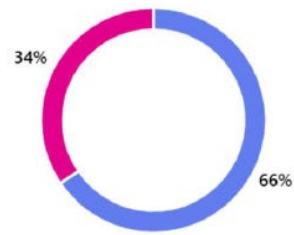


3. What is your shift pattern?



4. Are you aware of your entitlement to a break throughout your working day?

● Yes 19
● No 10



5. Do you know where to find your entitlement?

● Yes 13
● No 16



6. What are your normal break times?

29
Responses

Latest Responses
 "N/A - don't take a specific break"
 "12:30 - 1pm"
 "I can take my break if there is no call to attend"
 ...

7 respondents (24%) answered Break for this question.

usually miss Operational demand shift patterns demand and shift varies- can go all shift
 spare time shift Break time mins Depends on call demand
 day is different response times demand n't get breaks
 Paid lunch specific break set time Rarely take a break big drive

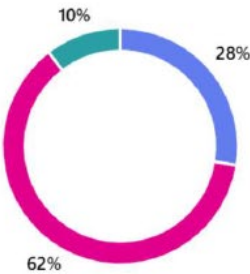
7. Do you bring lunch with you?

● Yes	12
● No	1
● Sometimes	16



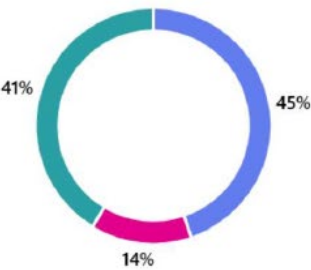
8. What do you typically bring to work?

● Hot food	8
● Packed lunch	18
● Other	3



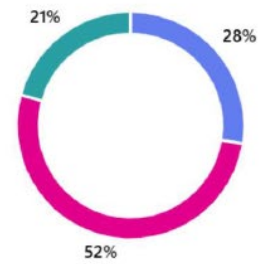
9. Do you buy food at work?

● Yes	13
● No	4
● Sometimes	12



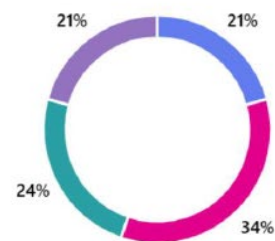
10. What typically would you choose to buy?

Fast food	8
Easy to eat on the go	15
Ready Meal to microwave	6



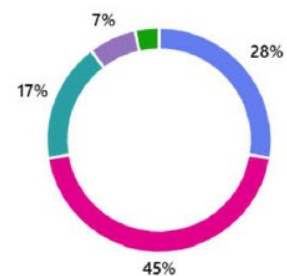
11. Do you think the food you eat at work affects your performance?

Yes, it has a positive impact	6
Yes, it has a negative impact	10
No, I have not noticed an impact	7
I'm not sure	6



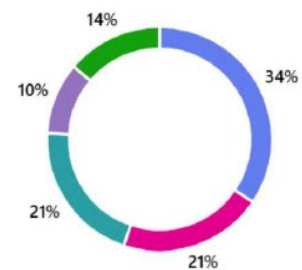
12. Have you ever had to miss your break due to operational demands?

Almost every shift	8
Frequently (a few times per set / week)	13
Occasionally (a few times a month)	5
Rarely (once a month)	2
Never, I always get my full break	1



13. If you have missed your breaks, what impact, if any has this had on you?

Increased fatigue or exhaustion	10
Reduced concentration or decision making ability	6
Increased stress or frustration	6
No significant impact	3
Other	4



14. Have you an example where you have been affected in work due to lack of food?

29

Responses

Latest Responses

"Hospital watches, 2-to-1s and handovers are often difficult due to lack of food. T... "

"N/A"

"Not typical example to give - just frustration and increased stress"

...

5 respondents (17%) answered shift for this question.



15. Do you have anything else you wish to share on the matter of Policing on an Empty Stomach?

29

Responses

Latest Responses

"The force should consider stocking us with food in the stations"

"No"

"NA"

...

4 respondents (14%) answered food for this question.

