



OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Stan Sewell, City Auditor

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Tim Kelly
City Council Members

From: Stan Sewell, City Auditor

Date: December 12, 2023

Re: Ethics Survey 2023

Integrity and ethical values are an integral part of the City's process to achieve desired goals. To evaluate the effectiveness of the work environment, the Office of Internal Audit conducted an anonymous survey to determine employee opinions of the City's work environment. Survey questions primarily relate to ethical culture. However, we have included some questions that pertain to the broader work environment. A similar survey has been conducted the last few years allowing for some prior year and trend analysis. Forty-four percent of full and part time employees responded to the survey (1,008 individuals). This is a slightly higher percentage of employees than responded last year (2022).

The position classifications of respondents this year were consistent with prior years. Approximately two-thirds classified themselves as staff, and one-third classified as middle management.¹ The majority of respondents believe their supervisor demonstrates high ethical standards, believe their department's policies & procedures help them do their job effectively, believe their job responsibilities and reporting relationships have been clearly established and communicated to them, know how to report fraud, waste and abuse, and feel having a well-run City is a top priority for leadership.²

We noted the following differences in the perceptions of employees based on their classification as staff, middle or upper management level:

¹ Work Environment Survey question 1.

² Work Environment Survey questions 3, 6, 7, 11 & 12.

- With regard to whether wrongdoing would stop if reported, fewer staff level employees (55%) thought wrongdoing would stop than middle management (58%) or upper management (67%).³
- Fewer staff level employees (52%) believe they would not experience retaliation if they report wrongdoing than middle management (54%) or upper management (78%).⁴
- Fewer staff level employees (72%) believe their department's policies and procedures help them do their job effectively than middle management (81%) or upper management (76%).⁵
- In regard to satisfaction with training opportunities, fewer staff level employees (69%) are satisfied than middle management (77%) or upper management (80%).⁶

The perceptions with a positive change compared to 2022 pertained to receiving a periodic job evaluation or performance appraisal (68% in 2023 vs 53% in 2022), and whether it was beneficial (60% in 2023 vs 59% in 2022).⁷ Additionally, slightly more respondents indicated they know how to report fraud, waste and abuse (88% in 2023 vs 87% in 2022).⁸

Most other responses trended negatively when compared to last year. For example, the following are two areas that trended negatively compared to the prior year:⁹

- If reported, are you confident wrongdoing would stop? (23% answered no in 2023 and 19% in 2022); and
- Do your department's policies and procedures help you do your job effectively? (74% answered yes in 2023 and 78% in 2022).

Summary graphs displaying the results of our work environment survey are attached. Detail data can be obtained in Excel format on the Office of Internal Audit's page of the City's website. We encourage analysis of the raw data to obtain a more in depth understanding of perceptions by applying various filters (such as comparing current year to prior year for individual departments).¹⁰

³ Work Environment Survey question 4.

⁴ Work Environment Survey question 5.

⁵ Work Environment Survey question 6.

⁶ Work Environment Survey question 8.

⁷ Work Environment Survey questions 9 & 10.

⁸ Work Environment Survey question 11.

⁹ Work Environment Survey questions 4 & 6.

¹⁰ Prior to our survey, the Waste Resources Division was removed from the Public Works Department and is now a separate department (Wastewater Department). This change should be considered when making comparisons to prior year data for the Public Works Department. Wastewater Department employee responses are reported in the "Other" department category.

The issues discussed in this memorandum are not the result of an audit performed in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Had we performed such an audit, additional issues might have been reported.

Attachment

cc: Audit Committee

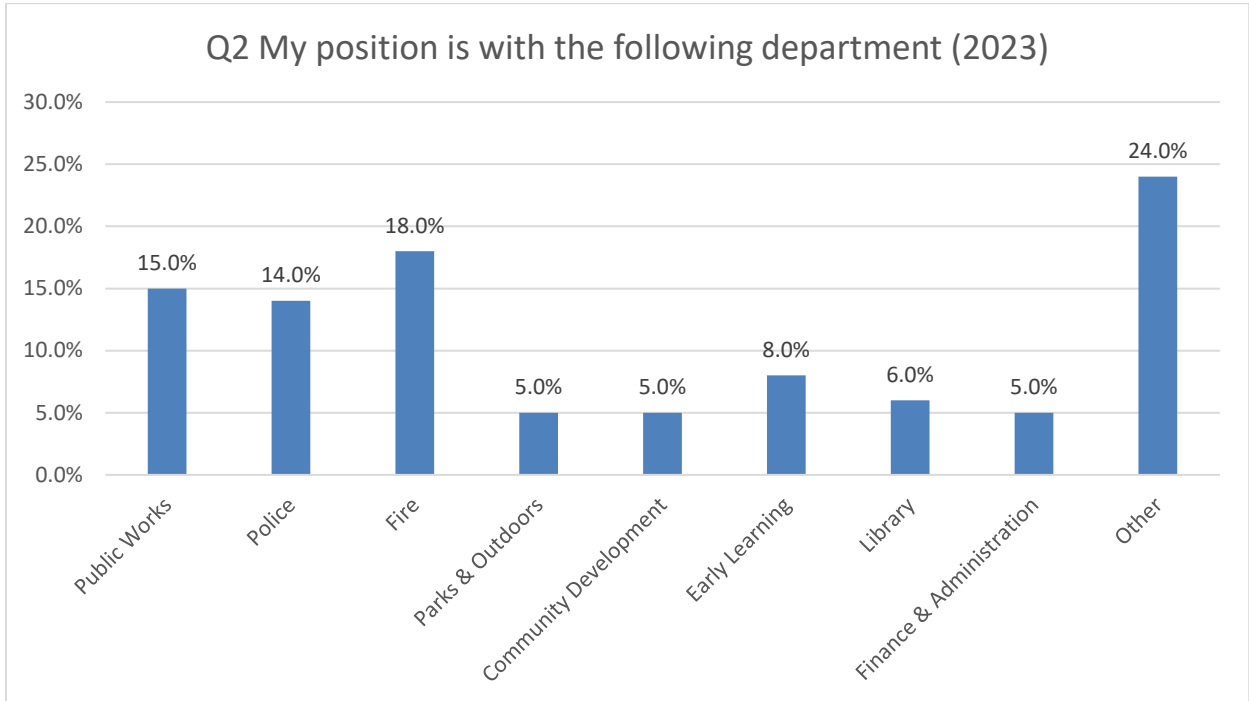
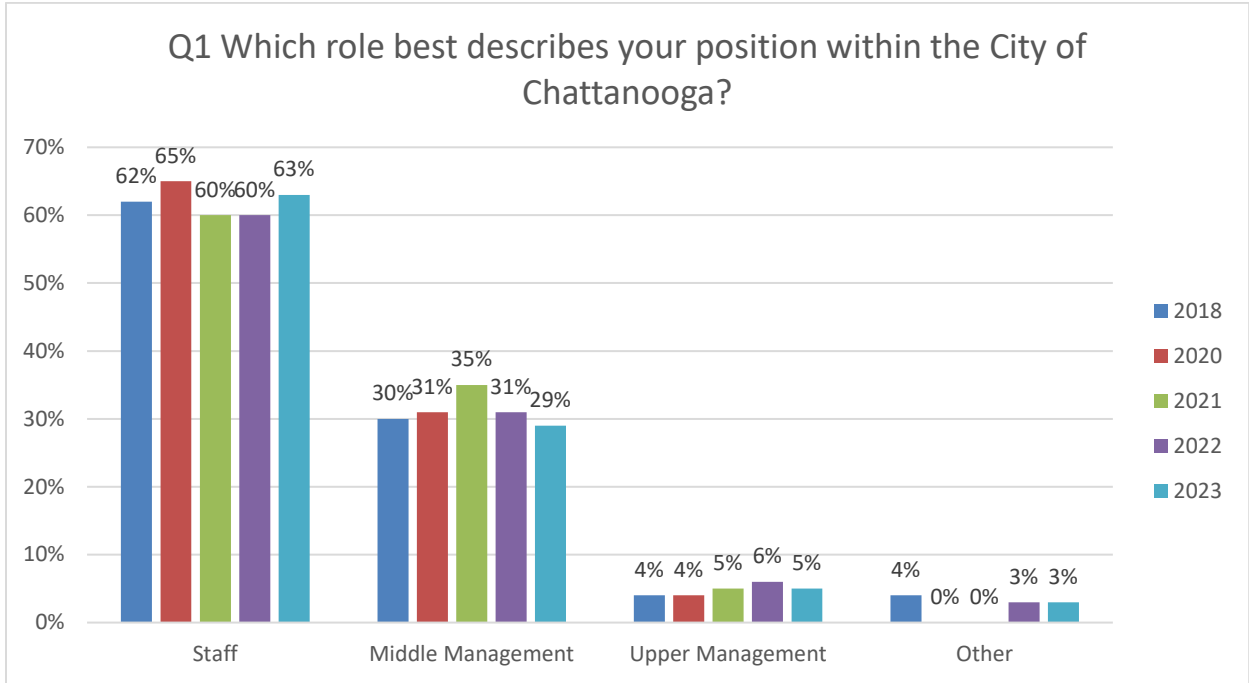
Jermaine Freeman, Chief of Staff

Ryan Ewalt, Chief Operating Officer

Julia Bursch, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

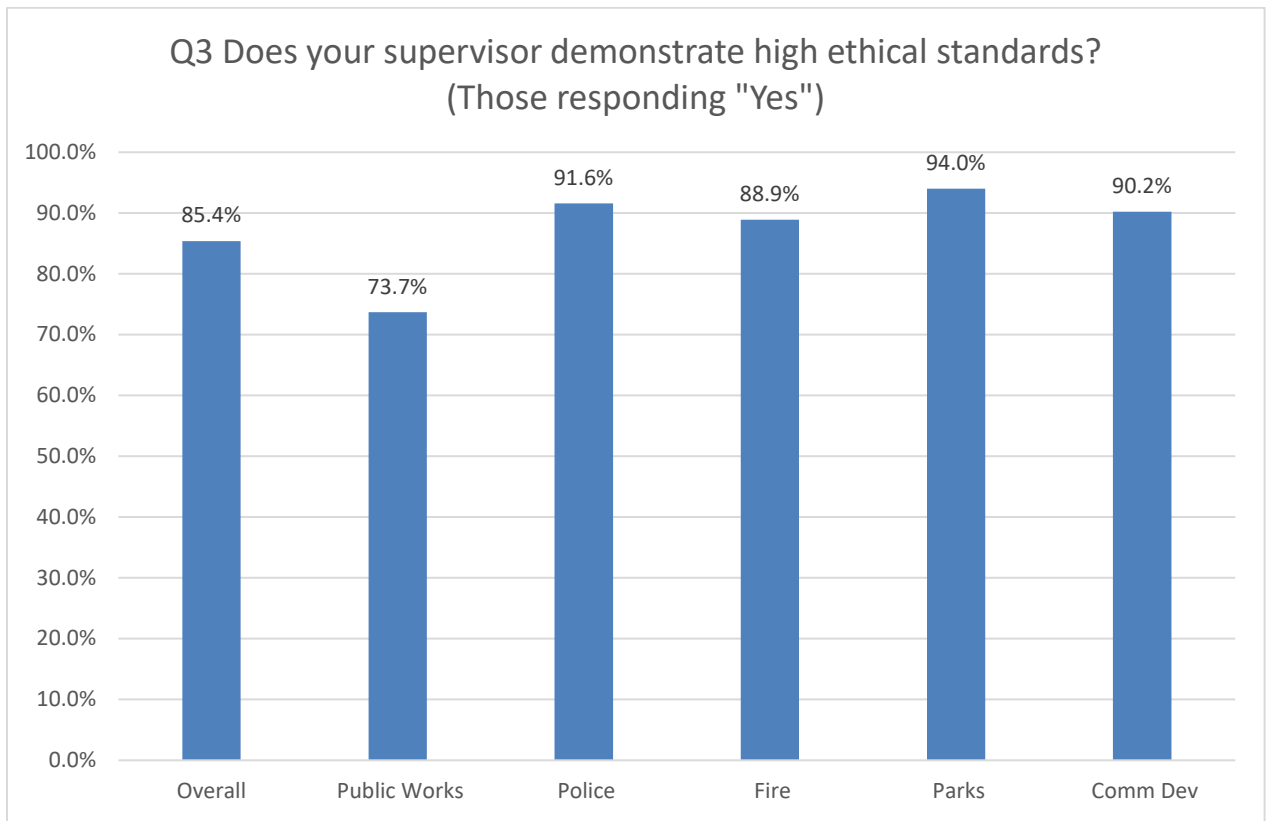
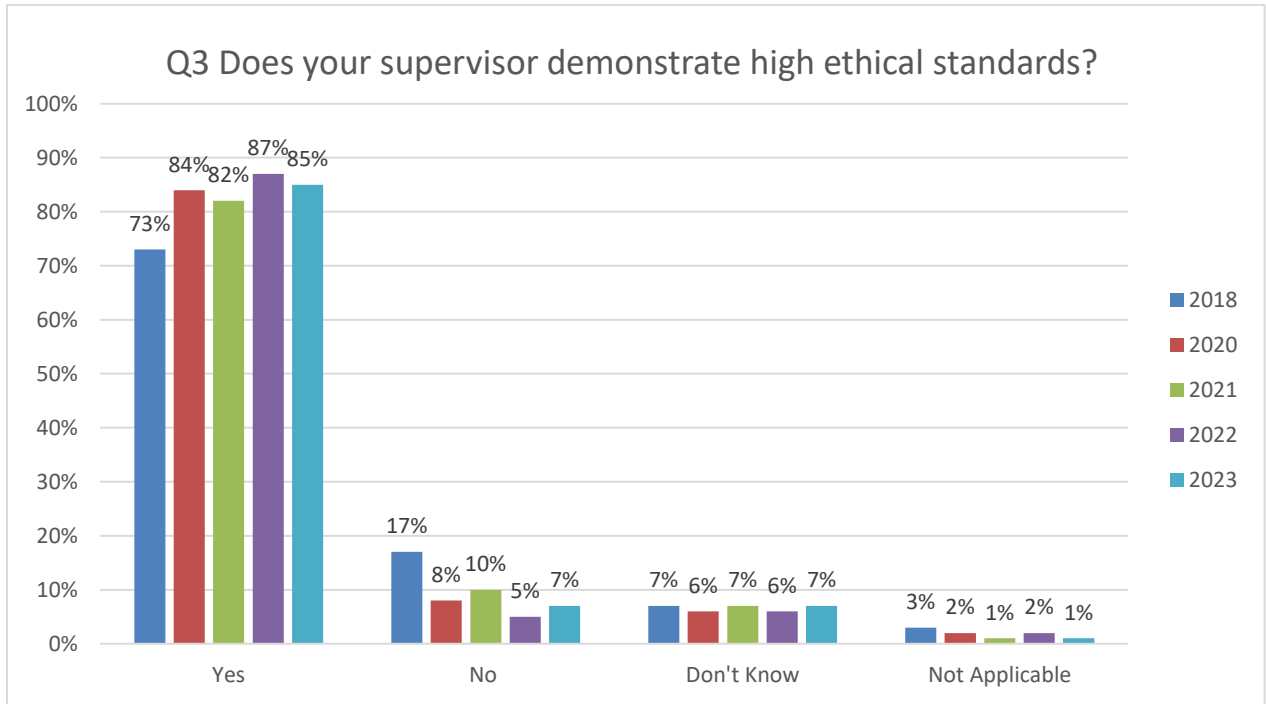
Department Heads

City of Chattanooga Work Environment Survey 2023

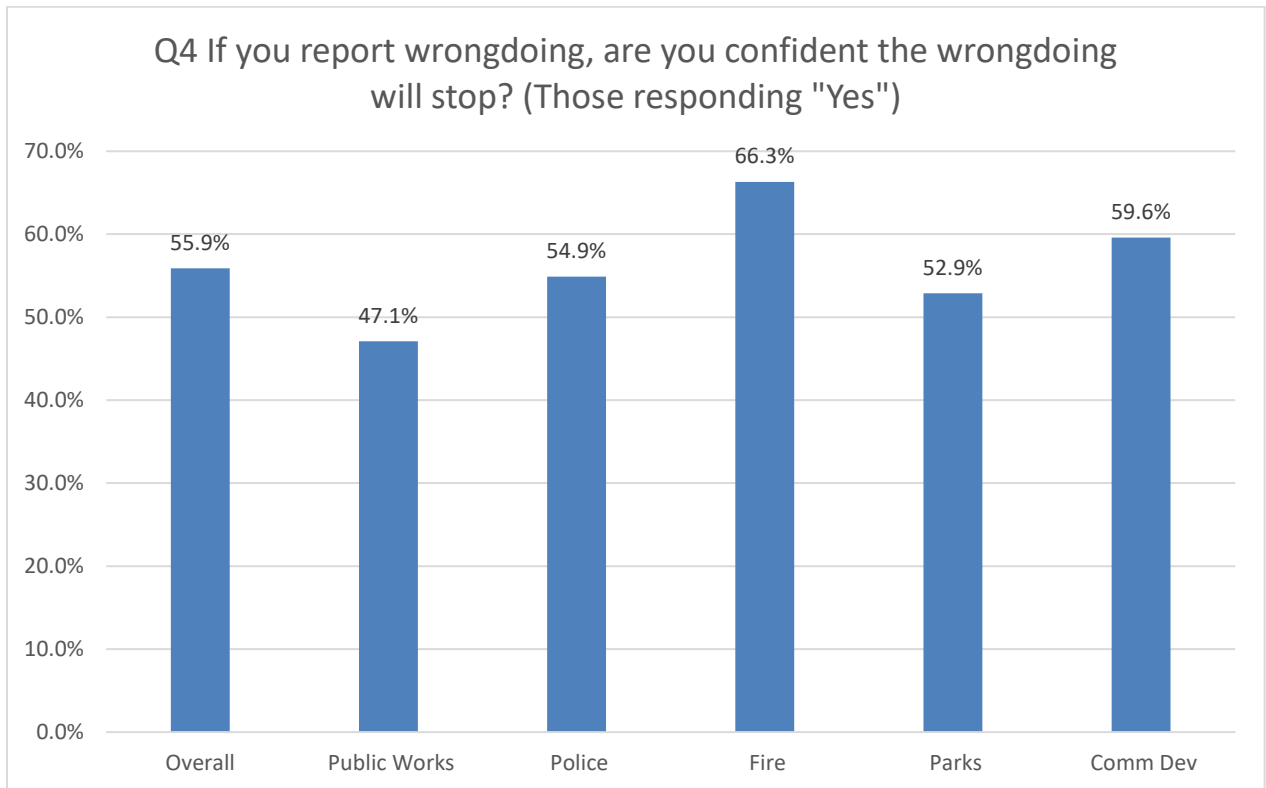
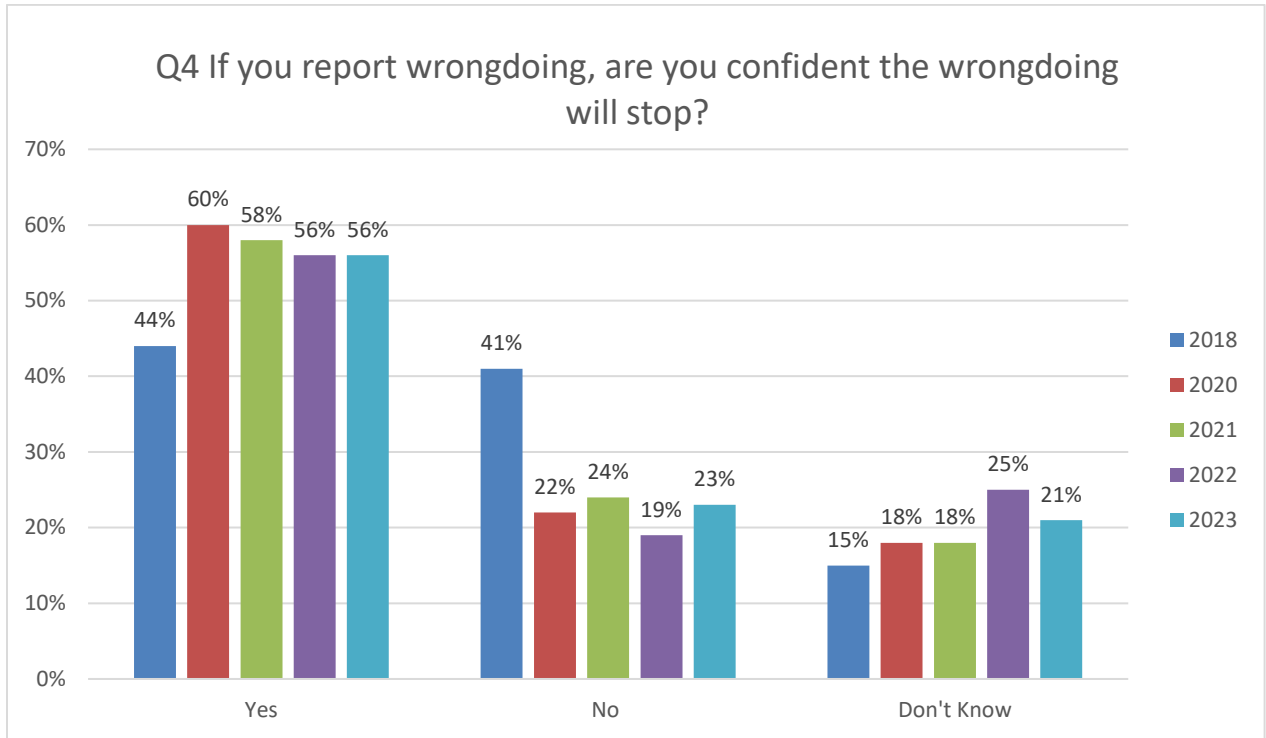


Note: The 2018 survey was conducted as a component of an audit and had fewer respondents (506) than later years. Although we present the 2018 data in our graphs, comparisons to 2018 should be made with caution due to the lower response rate.

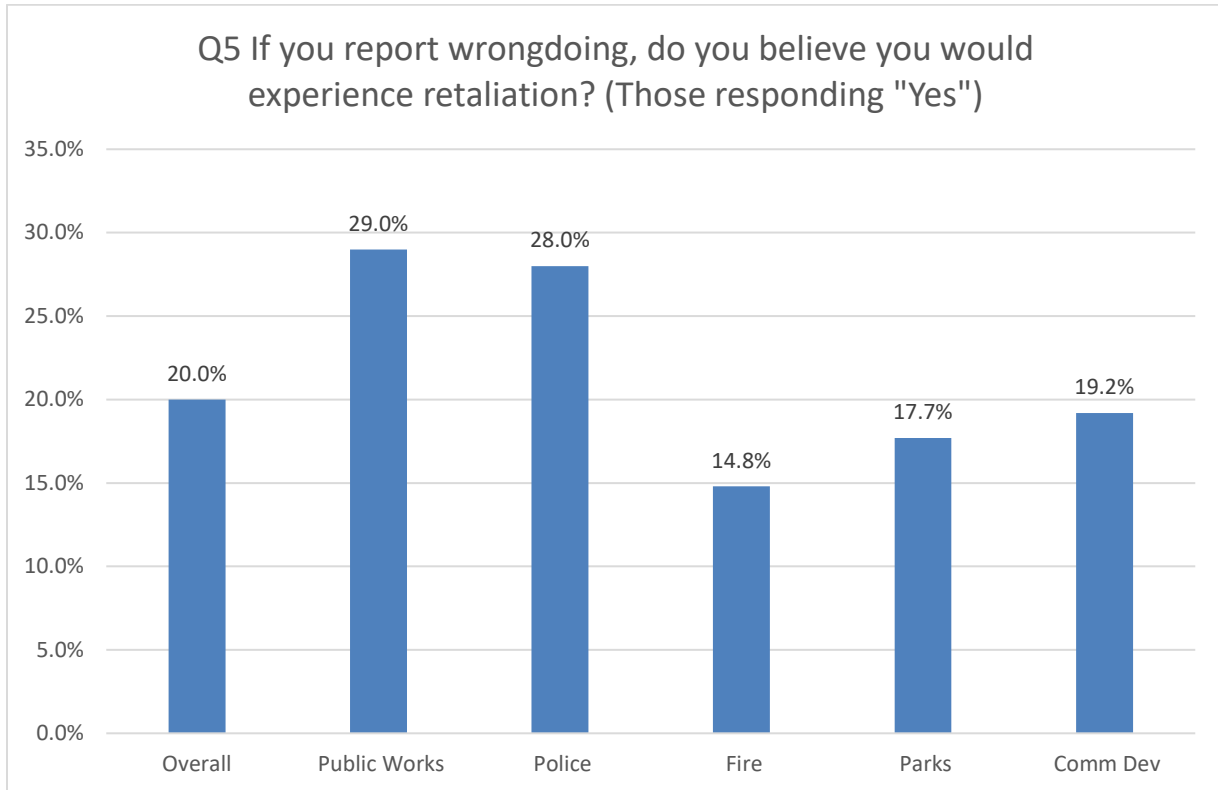
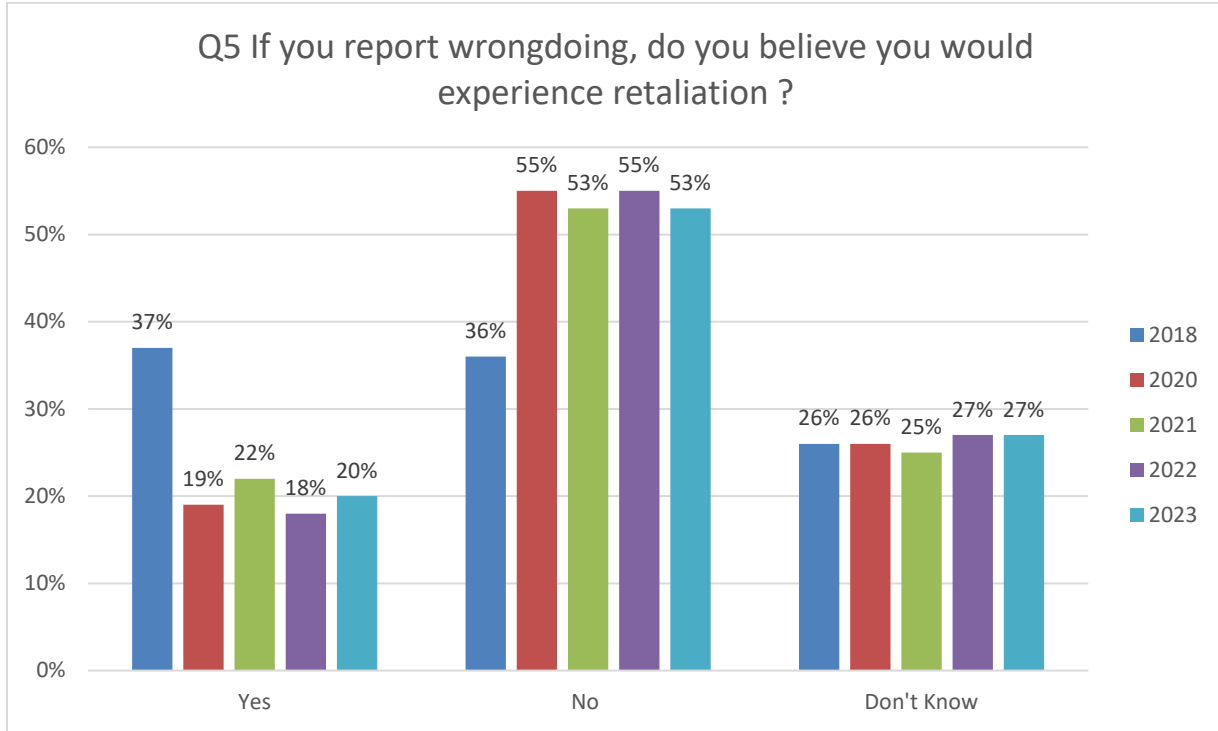
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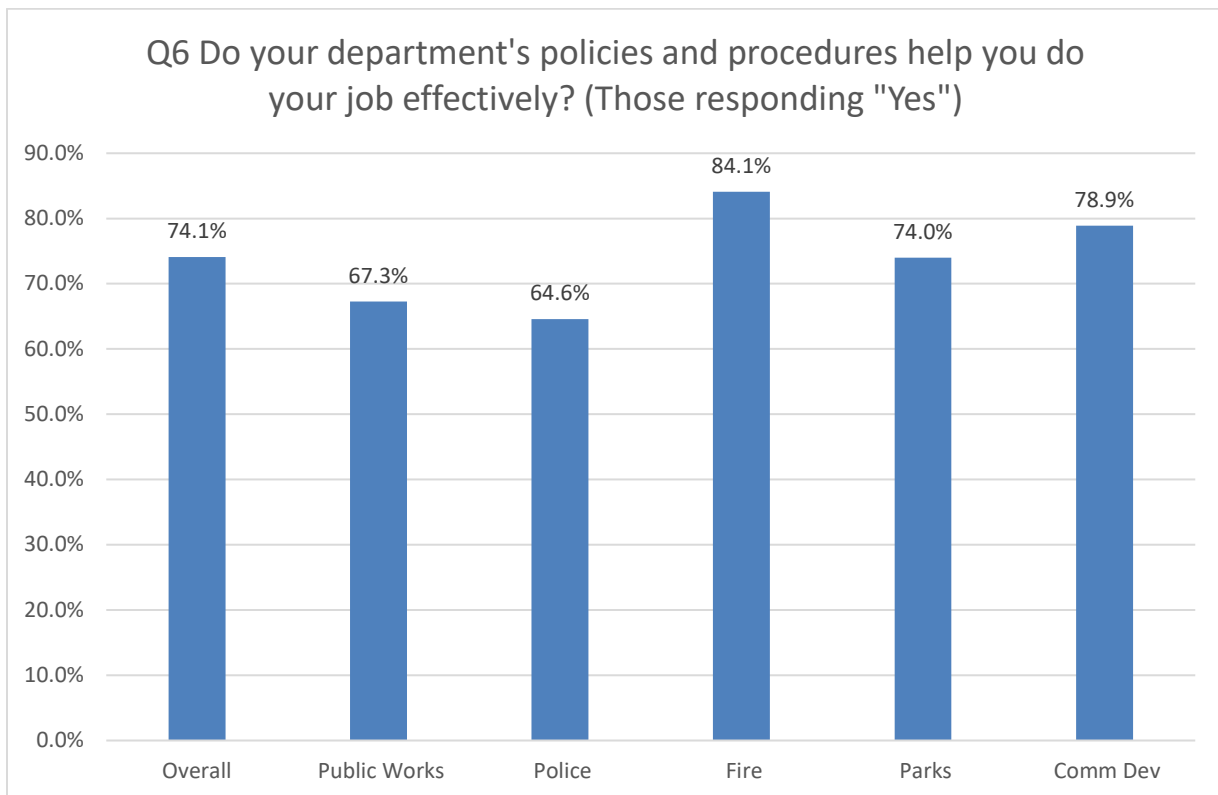
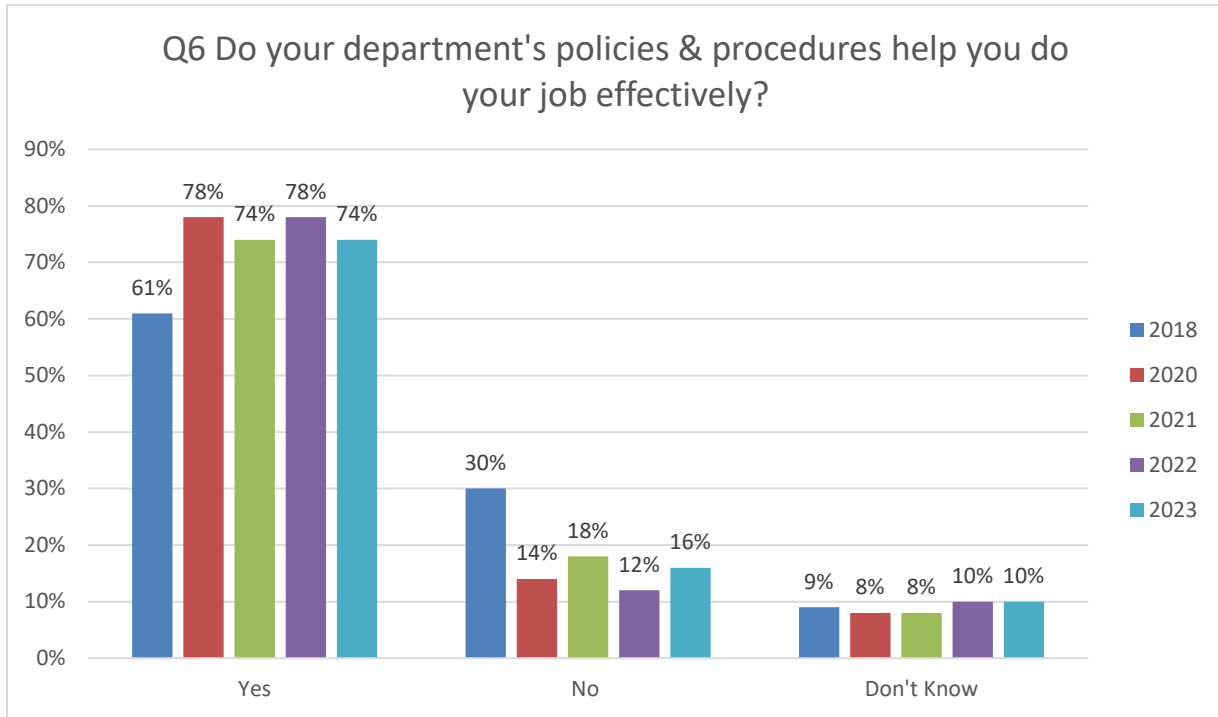
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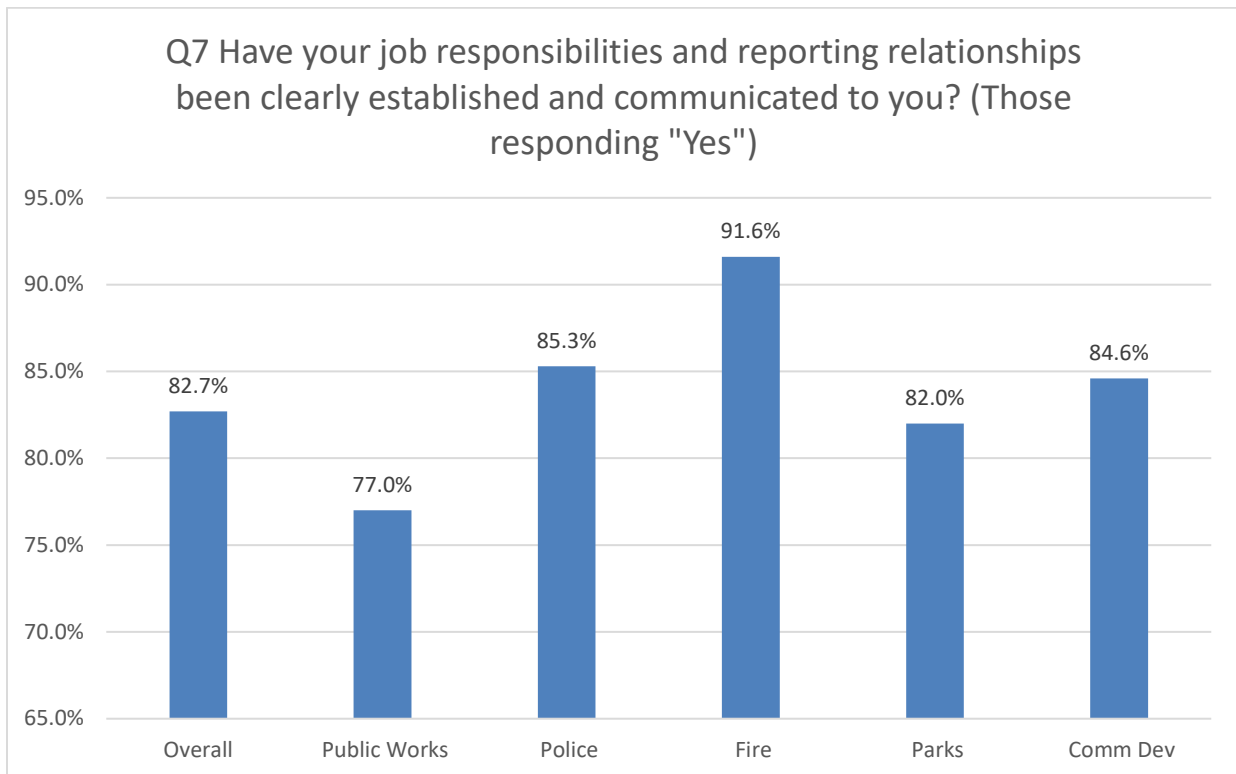
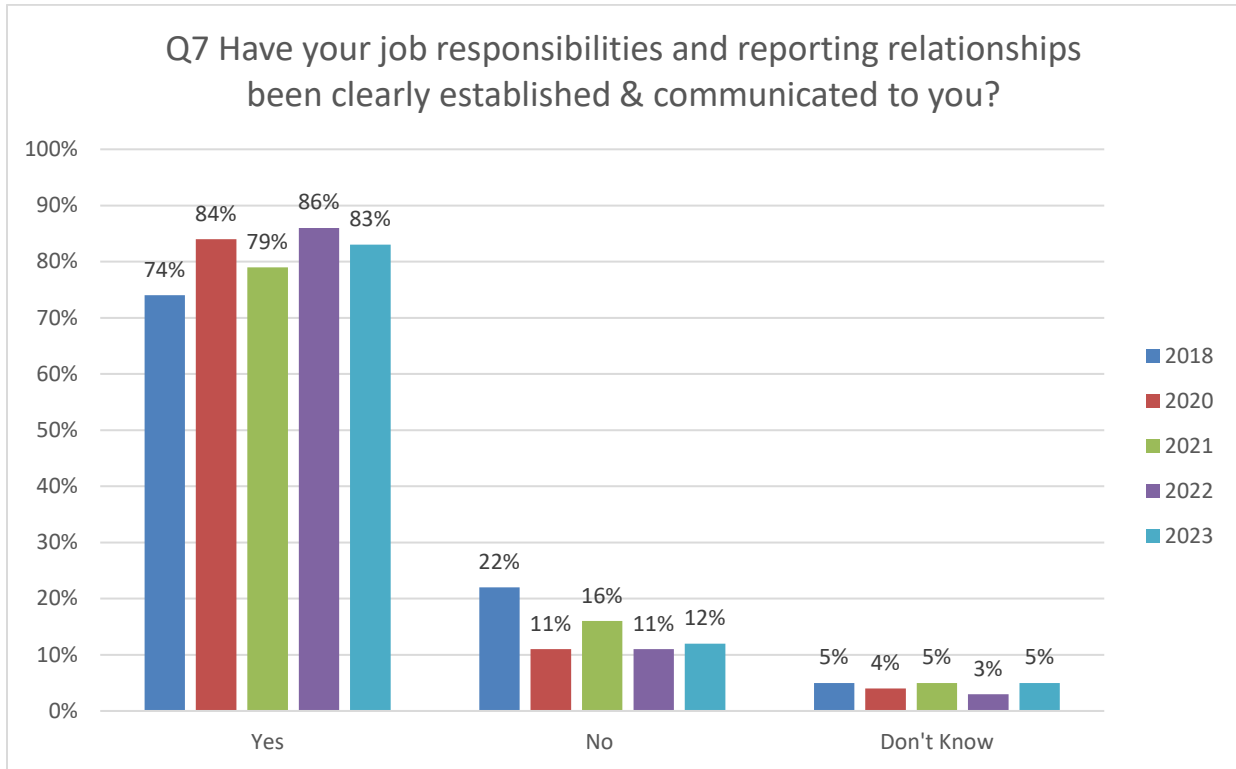
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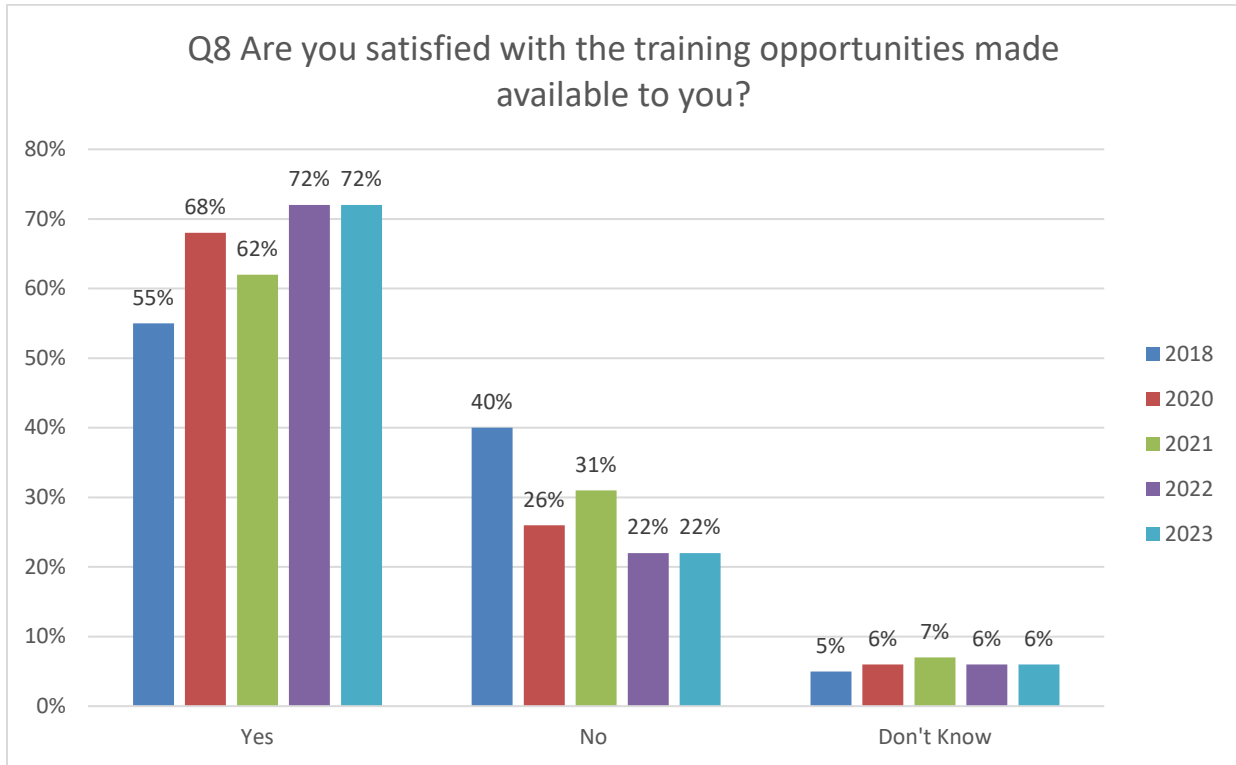
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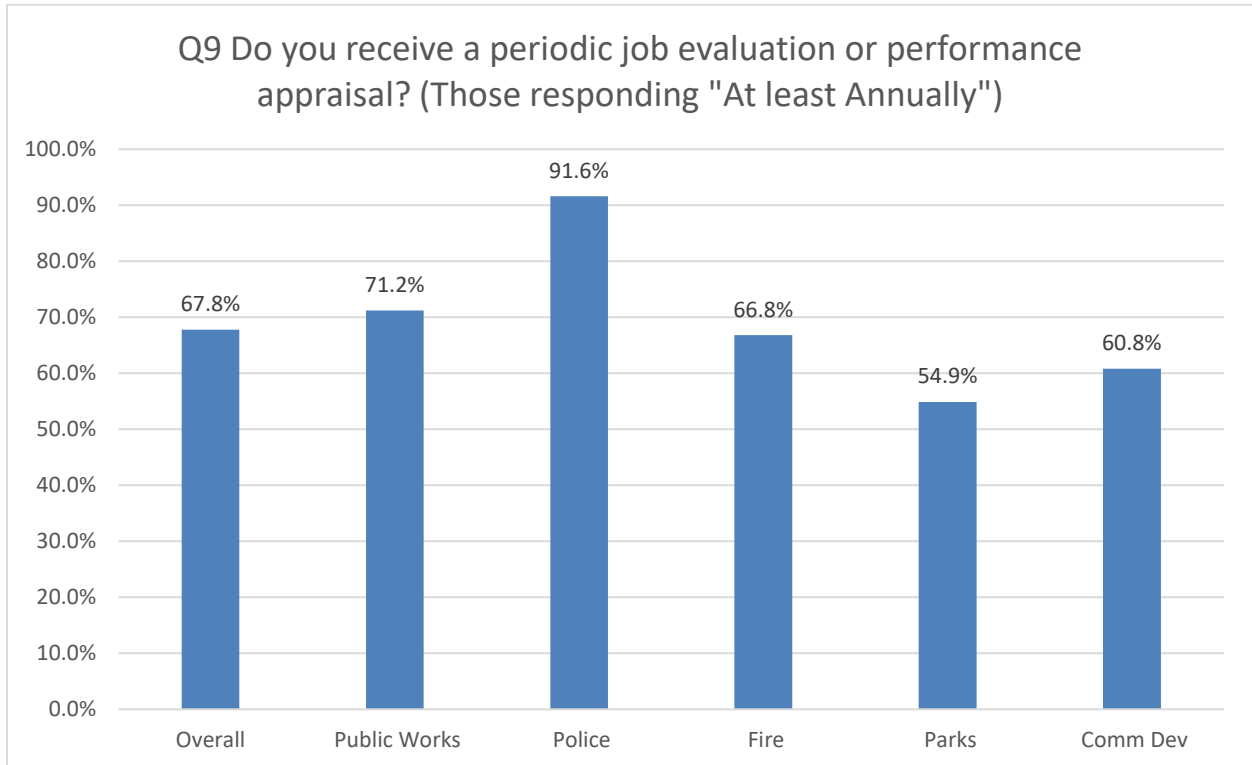
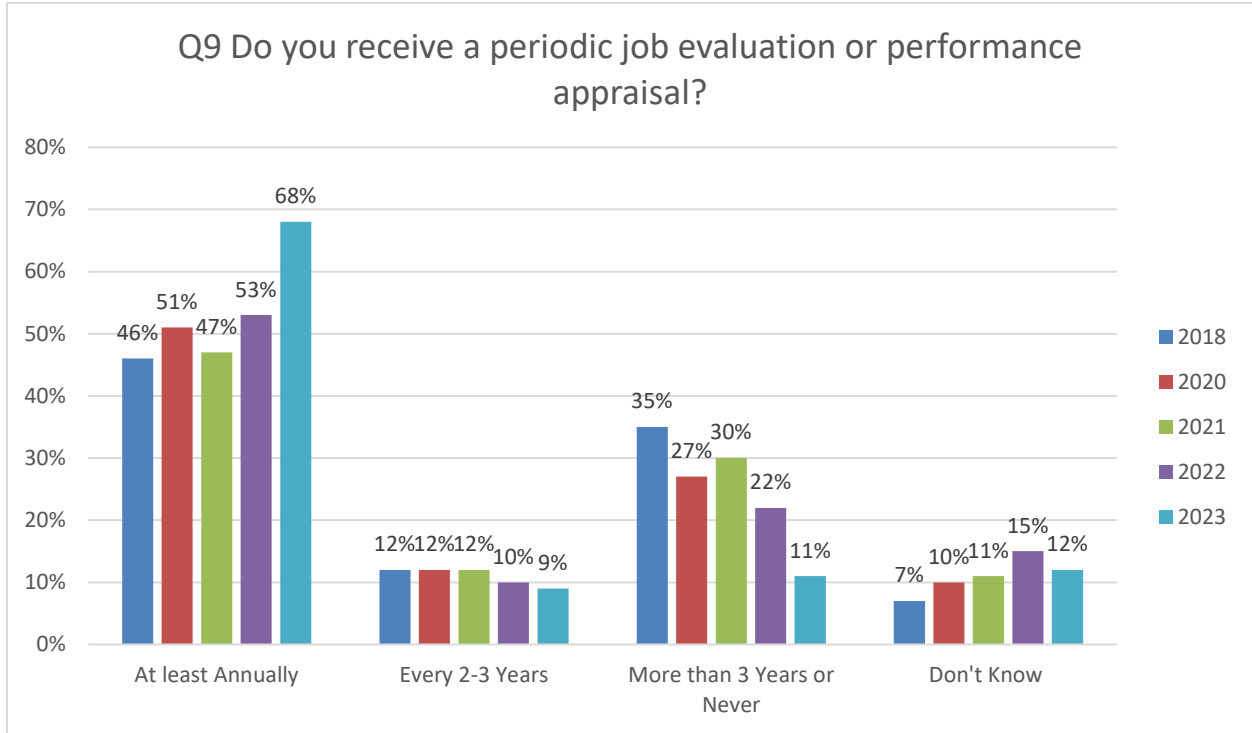
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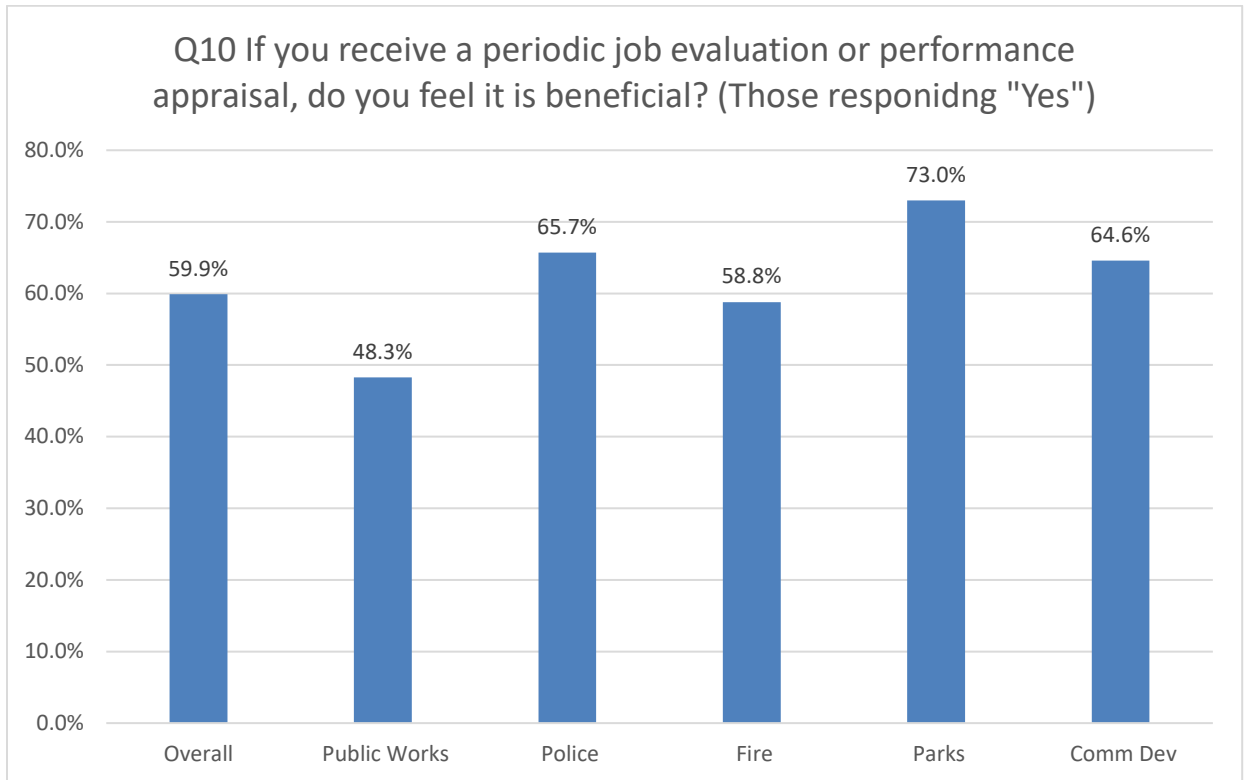
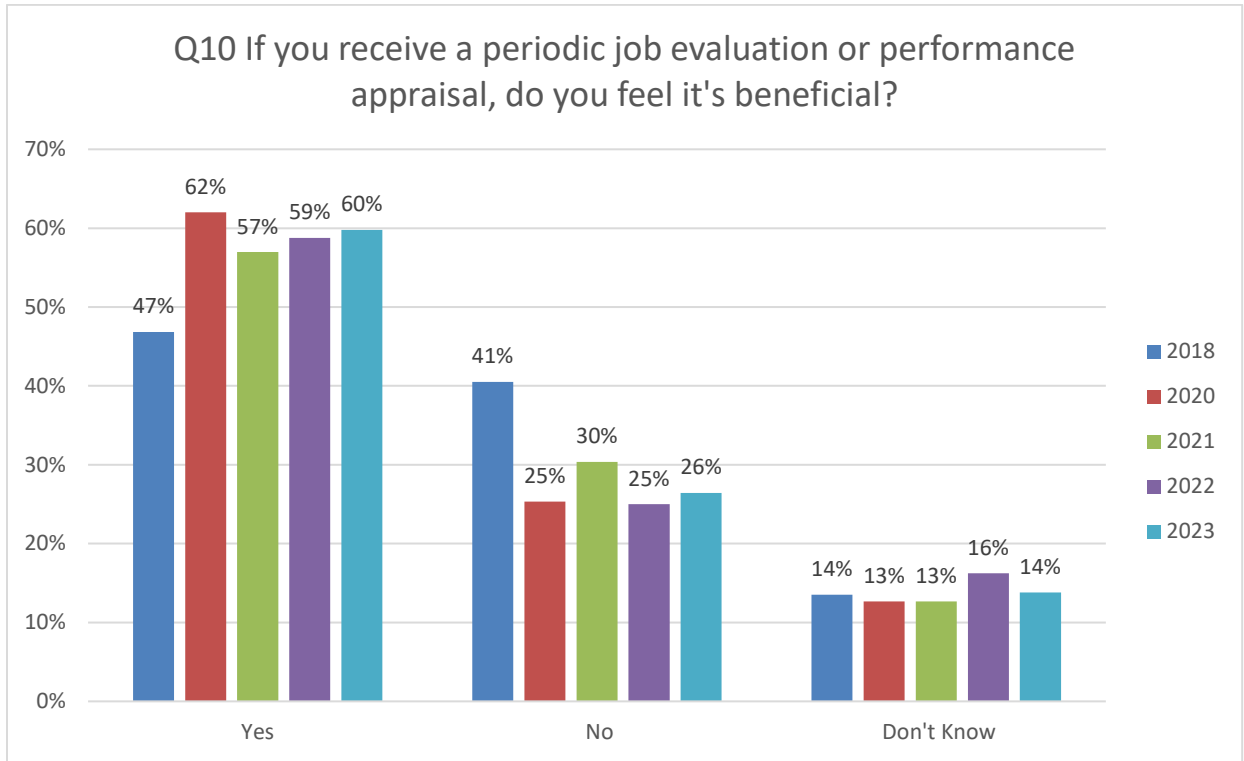
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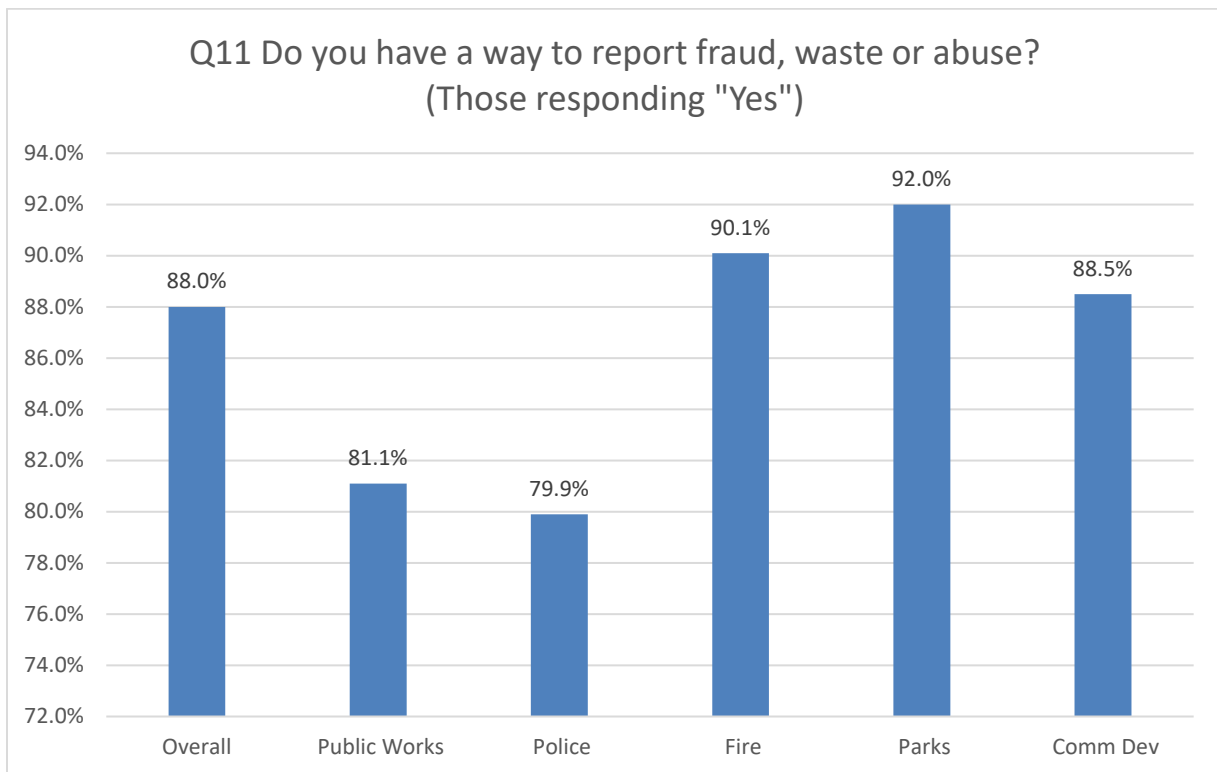
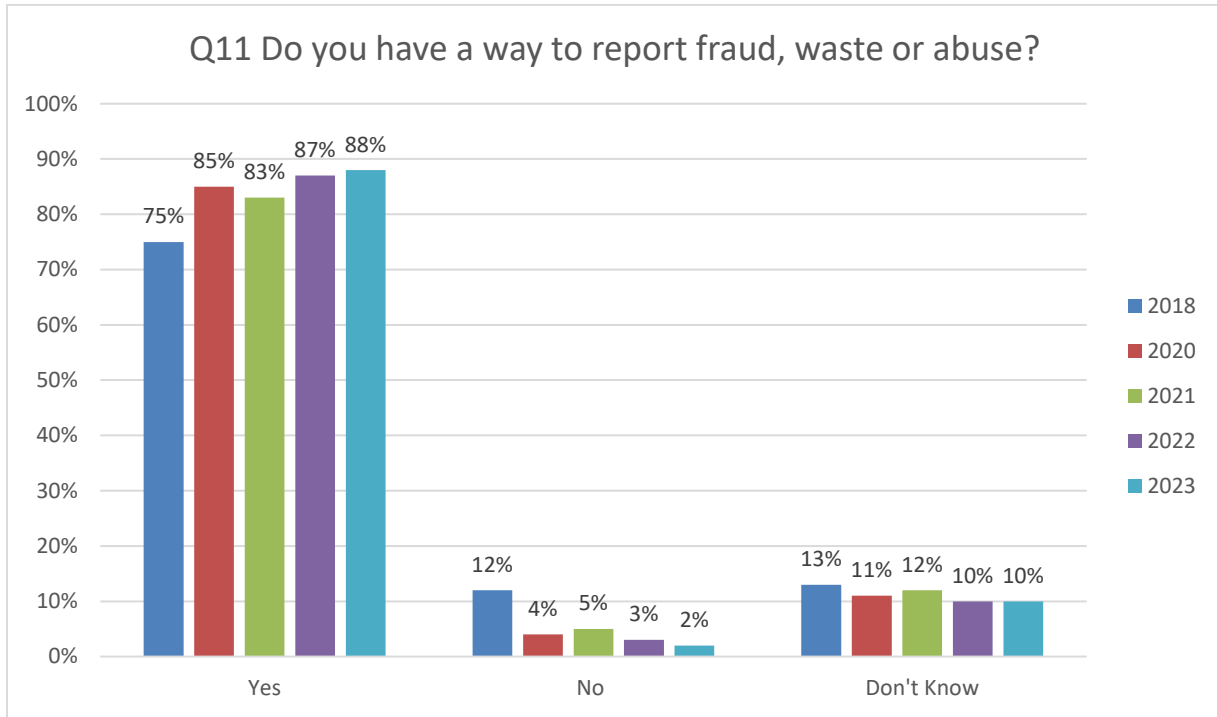
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