

APSE Roundtable

The future of school crossing patrols



Legislative context

- The **Transport Act 2000** broadened the role of school crossing patrols beyond traditional school hours
- Patrols can assist **all pedestrians**, not only children
- In Scotland, the **School Crossing Patrol Sign (Scotland) Regulations 2008** set requirements for signage and visibility
- **Key point for authorities**
- There is **no legal duty** to provide school crossing patrols

Decisions are therefore shaped by:

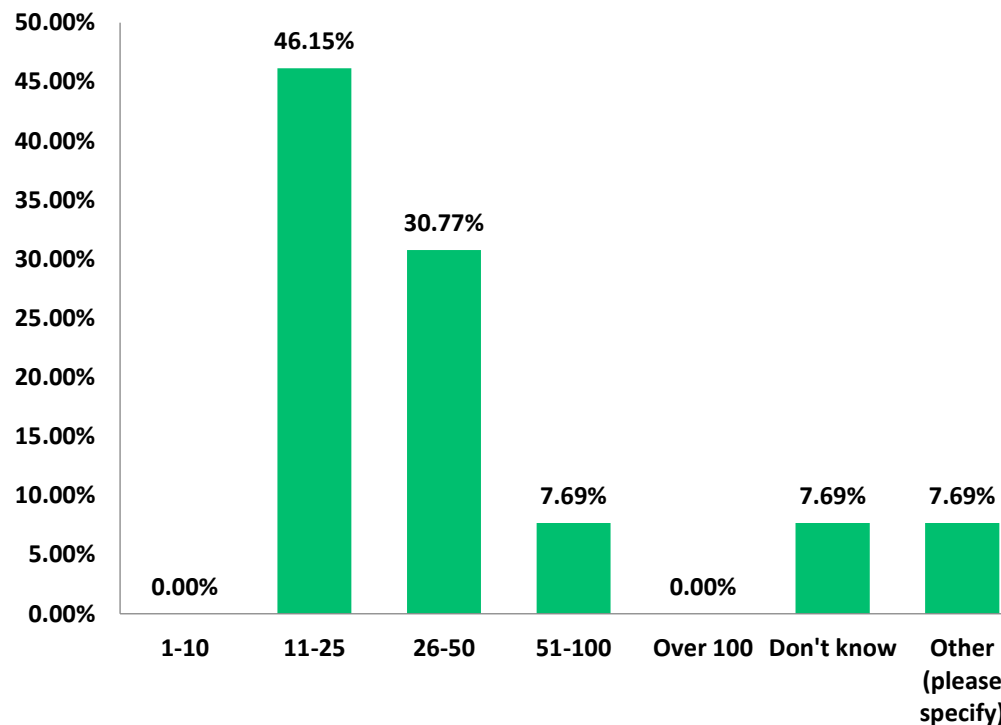
- local risk
- policy priorities
- affordability
- operational capacity

Funded patrol sites

- Most responding authorities operate at a **modest to medium scale**
- **46.15%** fund **11–25 sites**
- **30.77%** fund **26–50 sites**

This indicates that:

- School crossing patrols remain a recognised part of local road safety delivery
- But provision is generally **limited rather than expansive**
- This points to a service that is being **maintained selectively**

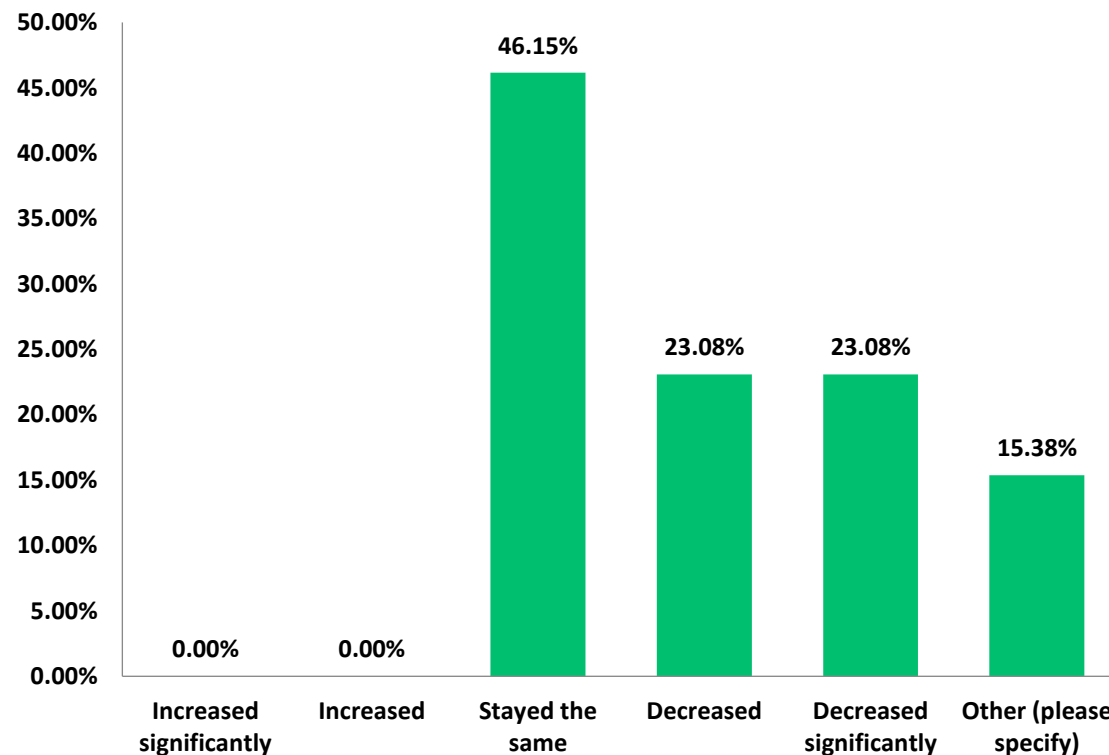


Trend over the last three years

- **46.15%** reported funded sites had **stayed the same**
- **46.16%** reported provision had **decreased or decreased significantly**
- No reported evidence of growth

Implications:-

- Provision is being managed **defensively**
- Councils are maintaining existing arrangements where possible, rather than expanding them
- This raises a wider question about the **future role of patrols** within:
 - road safety
 - active travel
 - place-based prevention





Delivery model and targeting

How services are delivered

- **84.62%** of respondents directly employ patrol staff
- **92.31%** operate patrols in both the **morning and afternoon**
- **15.38%** also provide **lunchtime cover**

How sites are prioritised

- High-traffic locations remain the main focus
- Some councils also prioritise:
 - younger children
 - areas of deprivation
 - children with SEND



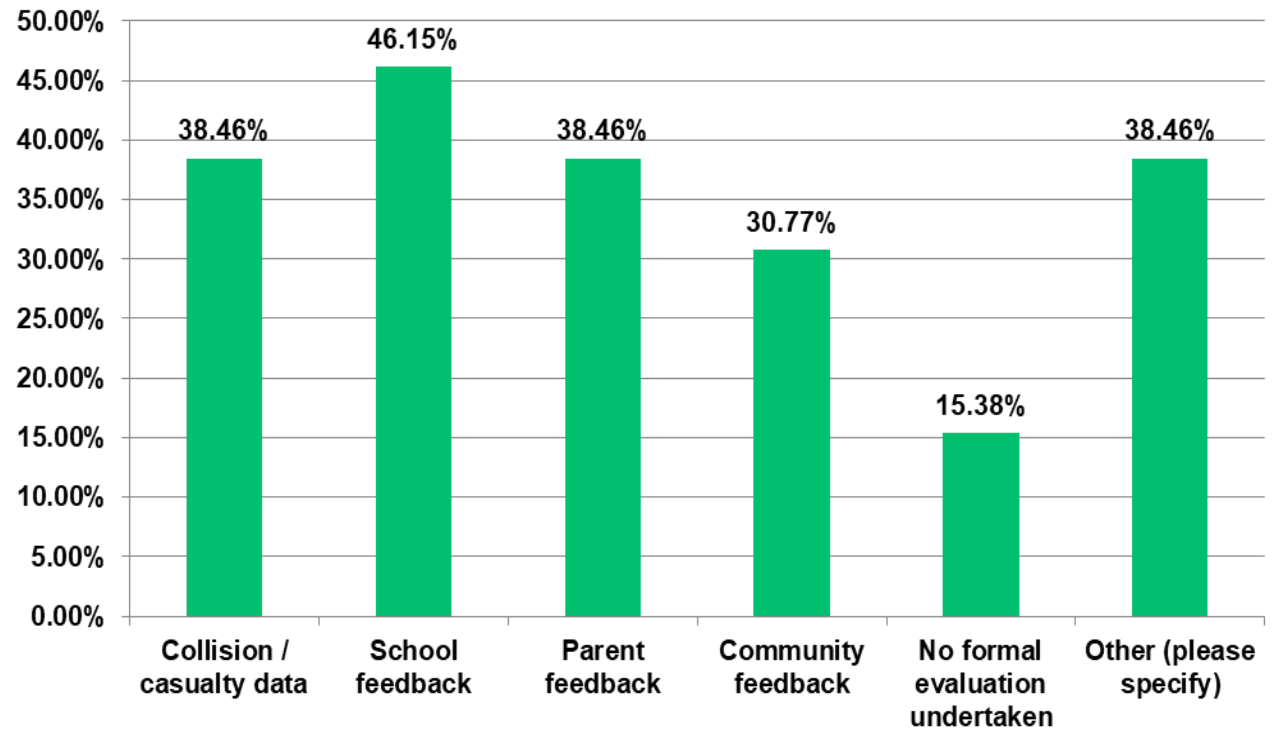
Evidence of effectiveness

What evidence do authorities use?

- **46.15%** use **school feedback**
- **38.46%** use **collision data**
- **38.46%** use **parent views**

Other approaches include:

- combined evidence sets
- site-specific risk assessments
- external road safety guidance



Funding and financial pressure

Funding source

- **100%** of respondents said patrols are funded through the **core local authority budget**

Financial pressure

- **41.66%** reported **significant or unsustainable pressure**

What this means

- The service is highly exposed to wider corporate budget pressures
- There is limited evidence of:
 - ringfenced funding
 - external funding
 - diversified funding models

Cost per patrol

Annual cost per patrol

- Costs vary, but responses suggest a **broad mid-range annual cost per site**

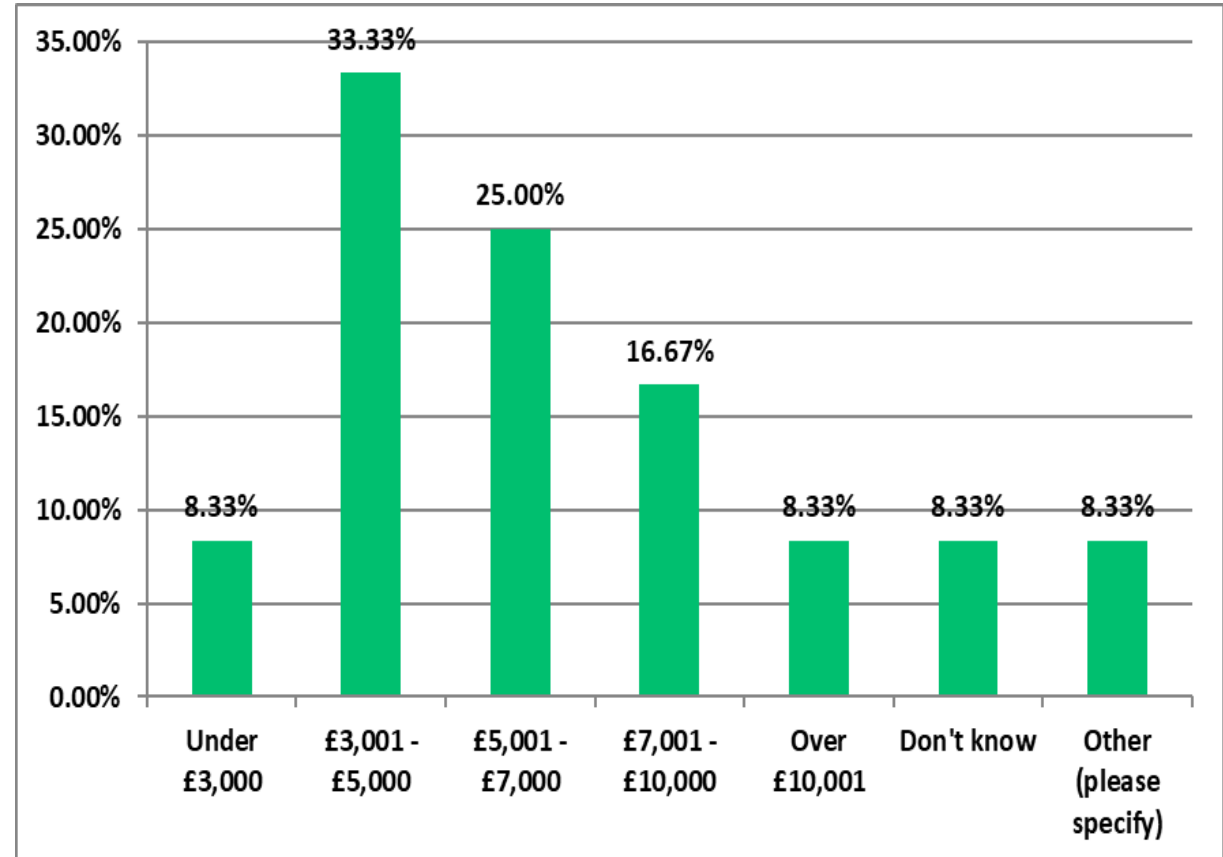
Key issue

- The main challenge is not variation between sites
- The bigger question is **overall affordability at service level**

Takeaway

Patrols are most sustainable where they are clearly connected to:

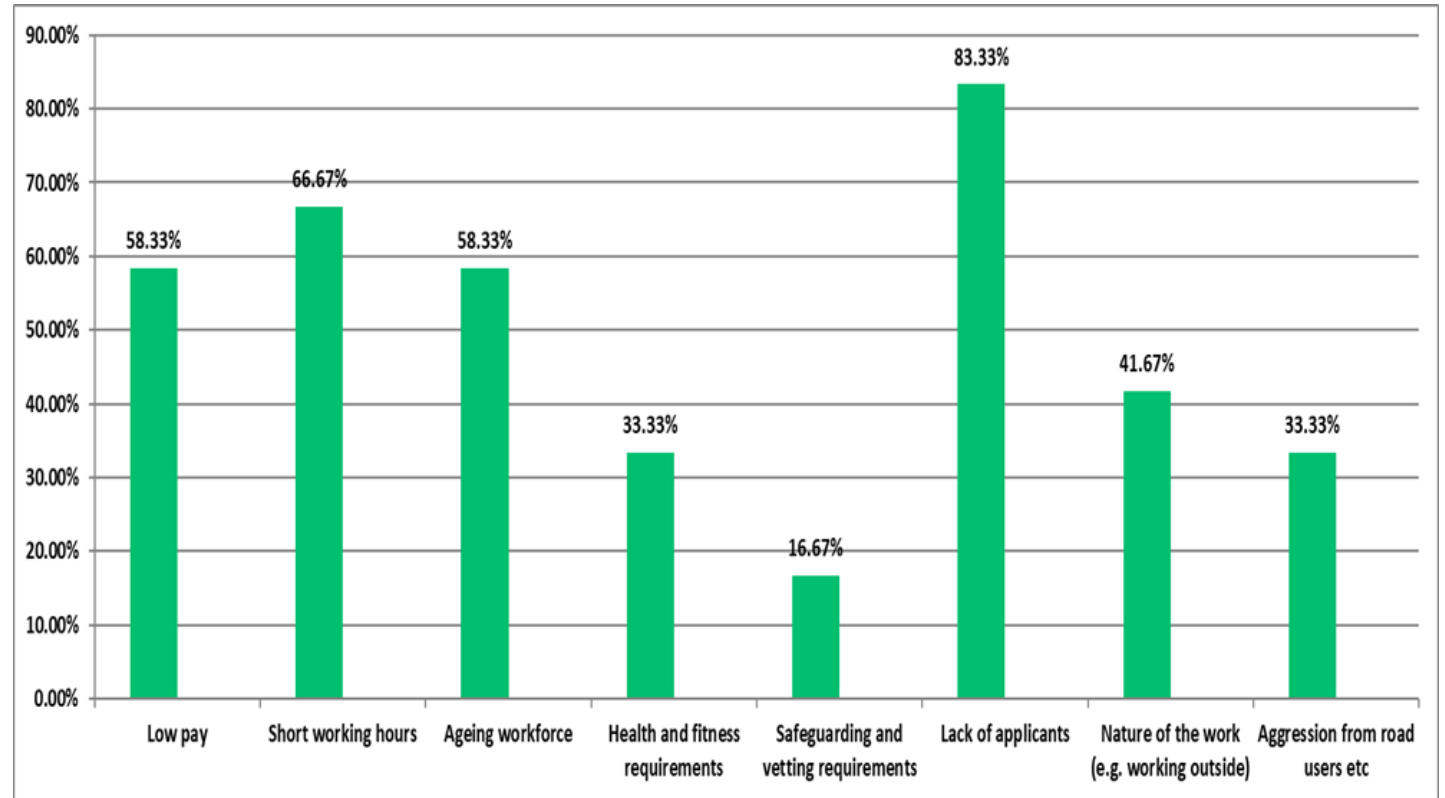
- transport policy
- prevention
- child safety outcomes
- wider road safety strategy



Workforce challenges

Recruitment and retention

- **66.67%** rated recruitment and retention challenges as **severe**
- **83.33%** said severe recruitment difficulty is driven by **lack of applicants**



Shaping future decisions?

Main factors influencing future provision

Budget constraints and **recruitment difficulties** were each cited by **54.55%** of respondents

Alternatives being considered

- Zebra crossings
- Signalised crossings
- Traffic calming
- School street approaches

In summary

- School crossing patrols continue to deliver recognised public value, but they lack a secure long-term funding and policy footing.
- Clarify the role of patrols within:
 - road safety
 - active travel
 - child safety
 - prevention strategies
- Prioritise provision at **high-risk sites**
- Strengthen the **evidence base** for retention, redesign or replacement
- Integrate patrol decisions with wider infrastructure planning
- Consider whether future sustainability requires:
 - stronger national guidance
 - dedicated funding
 - revised delivery models