

## 2025 POS Membership Survey – Executive Summary

The 2025 POS Membership Survey was open from 6th June until 5th August and received a total of 112 responses. This response rate was down slightly from the 2023 Survey (160 responses). Survey questions covered:

- respondent's job (location, salary, role etc);
- route into planning and training and development opportunities;
- working conditions;
- POS membership and networks;
- demographics.

### **Job location, role, salary**

The largest number of responses were received from members in the South East and East of England, but responses were more evenly spread across England than in the 2023 survey. The majority of respondents work for a district or unitary council.

As in 2023 the majority (over 60%) of respondents have worked in public sector for 15+ years, with a variety of roles represented (senior planner, principal planner, head of service).

The 2025 survey broadened the question focused on specific elements covered within the respondent's role, and responses demonstrate the multi-faceted nature of planning. A total of 61 respondent's ticked more than one response (e.g. development management, planning policy, enforcement, CIL etc). Respondents were also able to add in their own text with devolution and LGR appearing in a number of responses along with minerals and waste, flood risk, transport and conservation.

### **Route into planning**

The majority of respondents (90%) have a formal qualification in planning, primarily through full-time education. The 2025 survey had a higher % of respondents (6%) coming via apprenticeship compared to 2023 (2% of respondents).

Looking at the routes into the profession offered by employers, respondents noted that a range of routes are offered (graduate scheme / trainee position offered by over 70% of respondents).

The training and development question was expanded from 2023 survey to include a range of additional training types. The most common type of training is seminars / workshops focused on planning issues, with informal mentoring and seminars /

workshops also receiving a high percentage of responses.

Sources for training and development showed the top three being:

- POS
- RTPI
- PAS

POS received marginally more responses (%) in 2025 (78%) than in 2023 (67%)

Other sources include:

- TCPA
- Planning Inspectorate
- Chambers / legal updates
- Local networks

Reasons for using these sources:

- Free to use
- Aimed at planners
- Timing (one hour webinar vs a day long conference)

Just under 60% of respondents have their professional membership fees paid by their workplace.

### **Working conditions**

Just over 60% of all respondents said they feel supported in their role, a similar percentage to the 2023 survey. In 2025, a higher percentage (73% compared to 60% in 2023) said they could maintain a healthy work-life balance. The most common reasons for this, as per the comments, are hybrid working, flexible working, a good manager, full staff complement. Negative factors impacting the balance included professional reputation on the line if failure, lack of staff / team capacity, small council / too many hats.

Hybrid working is offered by all employers represented by respondents, with the majority of respondents working 2 days / week in the office (42%).

Working for the public good is considered the main benefit of working in the public sector, with flexible working and pension contributions also highly ranked. Challenges in the role include: public perception of planning, uncertainty in the profession and pressure to deliver to target.

Compared to 2023 a higher proportion of respondents want to continue to work in the public sector for the next three years (73% compared to 57%). For those thinking of

leaving the main reasons given are retirement, pay (relative to private sector) and impact on mental health.

### **POS Membership and networks**

As with 2023 responses there is a mix of membership duration, ranging from less than 3 years to over 10 years. The majority of respondents (72%) in 2025 are aware of the Regional Networks, with 20% or 18 respondents wanting to get more involved.

Membership of other networks is mixed, as in 2023. Respondents were asked to list what other types of networks may be of use and noted: chief planner / senior planner; legislative change; infrastructure & CIL; transport or health issues.

The benefits of being a member of a POS network are considered high, with 4 out of 5 respondents noting general information provision and an almost similar proportion noting sharing best practice.

In terms of overall support provided by POS the top three most useful types of support were:

- Newsletter (69 respondents selected this as one of their top 4 choices)
- Guidance / Manifesto / Consultation responses (46 respondents)
- Policy Forum (46 respondents)

In terms of what more could POS offer, training was the standout response at 83% of respondents. Events was listed by 1 out of 2 respondents and research listed by just over 1 in 3.

The two other membership organisations that respondents are also members of are RTPPI (95%) and TCPA (27%). Women in Planning network had the highest number of responses (80% of those who are members of another network – 16 respondents).

### **Demographics**

Responses from women were higher than those from men (50 relative to 37, with 22 skipping the Q and 3 prefer not to say). Most respondents were between 45 – 64 years old and describe their ethnicity as white. The majority of respondents do not have a declared disability.