



National Uniform & Equipment Survey 2024

Bedfordshire Police Force Report

Results: October 2025

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Key Findings

This report provides a summary of responses to key questions from the first National Uniform & Equipment Survey for Bedfordshire Police¹. National results and additional information are available in the main report **here**.

Respondents and Response Rate

- 132 responses were recorded from Bedfordshire Police, representing a response rate² of approximately 5% (based on March 2024 total police force headcount)³.
- 89% of respondents are police officers, and 11% are police staff.
- 23% of respondents identified as female, 52% as male, and 24% did not specify their sex.

Overall Uniform Experience

- 60% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said their experience of wearing uniform is 'negative' or 'extremely negative', which is higher than the average across the 43 forces in England and Wales of 56%.
- 21% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said their experience is 'positive', while 19% stated they have a 'neutral' experience.
- 41% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said their uniform items interact together 'poorly' or 'very poorly', while only 16% said their uniform items interact 'well'.

¹Note that force-specific percentages may differ from those in the main report as the individual force report data are not weighted. See Section 2.3 of the main report for more details.

²Response rates are calculated based on the total force population. Therefore, while, for example, a 10% response rate is reported for the force, the effective response rate among uniformed officers and staff—the intended population for this study—may be higher.

³Home Office (2025) Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31st March 2025: data tables [Dataset]. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables>

- 37% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police reported that their uniform items do not interact well together with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), while 22% said their uniform and PPE interact 'well'.

Uniform Functionality and Fit

- Over half (51%) of respondents from Bedfordshire Police disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose, while 26% agreed.
- 67% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police agreed that their uniform restricts their movement, higher than the 64% national average.
- 58% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police disagreed that their uniform is good quality, compared to 21% who agreed.
- 58% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said their uniform does not fit well, while 21% said their uniform fits well.
- 41% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police disagreed that their uniform is durable, while 32% agreed.
- 54% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said their uniform is uncomfortable, while only 16% said they are comfortable in their uniform.
- 86% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police disagreed that their uniform keeps them cool in summer, while only 3% agreed. This is higher than the national average of 74% who said the same.
- 39% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said their uniform does not keep them warm in winter, and 58% of respondents disagreed that their uniform is waterproof.

Uniform Items

- 70% of respondents who wear general purpose body armour (GPBA) said it contributes to a negative uniform experience, higher than the 61% average.

- 64% of respondents who wear general purpose trousers from Bedfordshire Police said this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.
- 67% of respondents who wear a dress shirt and 63% who wear a patrol helmet from Bedfordshire Police said these items contribute to a negative uniform experience.
- 57% of respondents who wear cargo trousers said this item contributes negatively to their experience of wearing uniform, lower than the national average of 69%.
- 53% of respondents who wear patrol boots from Bedfordshire Police said this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.

Uniform Access and Stores

- Only 12% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said that obtaining new uniform items is 'easy' or 'extremely easy', while 76% said it is 'difficult' or 'extremely difficult'.
- 31% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police reported that they have visited their local uniform store.
- The remaining respondents indicated the following reasons for not visiting a store: 20% said the store was too far to travel to, 16% did not know it was an option, 18% said it is not an option to visit, and 14% reported they are not allowed to visit a store.
- Among those who had visited a store, 42% stated that items were not available in their size, and 30% said some but not all items were available in their size.
- Only 14% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police received the items they ordered within weeks, compared to the national average of 48%. Most respondents (44%) received items within three months, a quarter (25%) faced long wait times of three to six months, and 15% waited six months or more.

Uniform Cost

- 87% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police agreed that cost drives uniform decisions and no respondents disagreed. The remaining 13% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Perception of Uniform

- 44% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said they feel professional in their uniform, lower than the average across England and Wales of 51%. 18% said they do not feel professional in their uniform.
- 39% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police feel they look smart in their uniform, while a third of respondents (33%) said they do not look smart.
- 48% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police feel proud in their uniform, while 13% said they do not feel proud in their uniform.

Uniform and Health and Wellbeing

- 52% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police reported at least one health condition they believe was caused or made worse by their uniform, highlighting clear concerns about the physical impact of uniform wear.
- Among those who provided their sex, 90% of female respondents from Bedfordshire Police reported at least one health condition they believe is caused or made worse by their uniform, compared to 57% of male respondents from this force.
- 38% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police agreed that their uniform affects their relationship with their body.
- 15% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police agreed that their uniform affects their mental wellbeing, while 17% agreed that their emotional wellbeing has been impacted by their uniform.

Complaints and Sick Leave

- 44% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said they had made a uniform-related complaint.
- For 64% of these complaints, no action was taken.
- 9% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police have taken time off work due to the negative effects of uniform, higher than the national average of 5%.
- 43% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police said that although they had experienced negative effects due to wearing their uniform, they did not take sick leave.
- Some of the reasons cited for not taking sick leave at Bedfordshire Police included concerns that taking sick leave would negatively affect work opportunities (10%), negative attitudes in the force (8%), a lack of perceived empathy from line managers (5%), and previous negative experiences disclosing uniform-related issues (7%).

Uniform Impact on Retention and Role Choices

- 15% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police have made decisions about their current or future roles based on the uniform they must wear. This includes transitioning to a non-uniformed role, choosing a role based on the required uniform, and even leaving the force due to uniform-related issues.

Thoughts on National Uniform

- 45% of respondents from Bedfordshire Police agreed that there should be a national uniform across England and Wales, while 21% disagreed, and 34% feel neutral.

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents who said that their experience of uniform is 'negative' or 'extremely negative'.

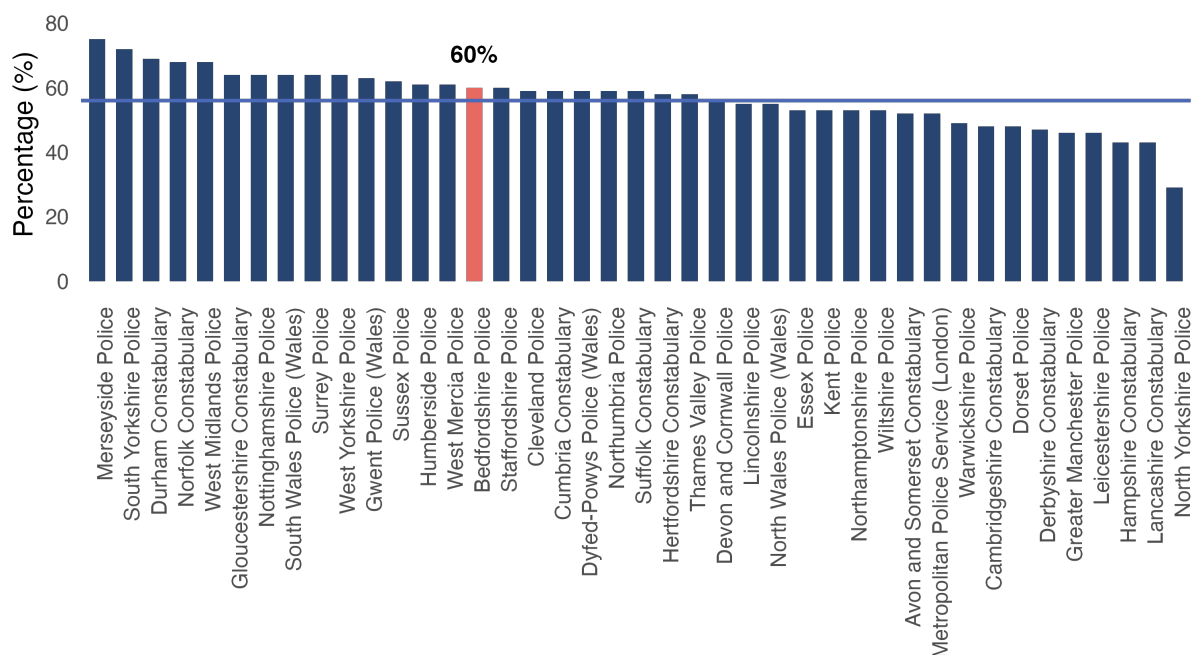


Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose.

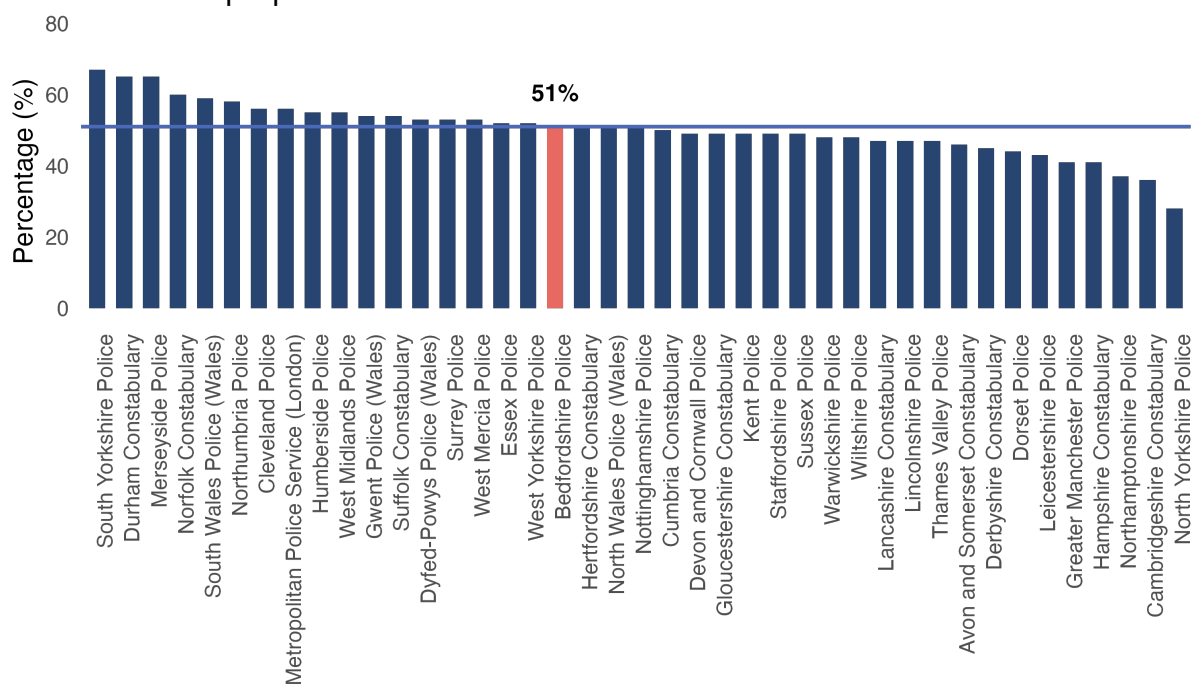


Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who reported one or more physical health conditions they believe to have been caused or made worse by their uniform.

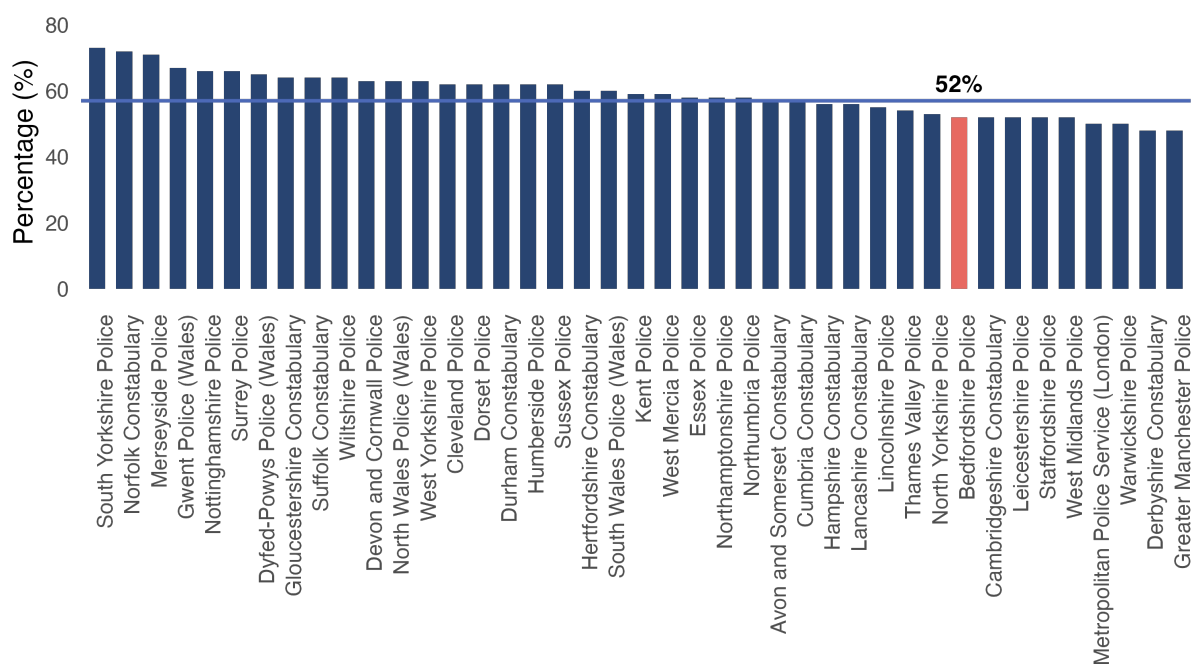


Figure 4: Proportion of uniform-related complaints where no action was taken.

