



National Uniform & Equipment Survey 2024

Northumbria Police Force Report

Results: October 2025

Dr Camilla De Camargo, Dr Stephanie Wallace, Lois Fairclough,
Dr Sahrish Khan, Zac Mader, Belinda Goodwin, & Dr Yuze Sha

Lancaster
University



POLICE
Federation



Key Findings

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

Respondents and Response Rate

- 576 responses were recorded from Northumbria Police, representing a response rate² of approximately 9% (based on March 2024 total police force headcount)³.
- 89% of respondents are police officers, and 11% are police staff.
- 30% of respondents identified as female, 51% as male, and 19% did not specify their sex.

Overall Uniform Experience

- 59% of respondents from Northumbria Police said their experience of wearing uniform is 'negative' or 'extremely negative', slightly higher than the 56% average across the 43 forces in England and Wales.
- 18% of respondents from Northumbria Police said their experience is 'positive', while 23% stated that they have a 'neutral' experience.
- 43% of respondents from Northumbria Police said their uniform items interact together 'poorly' or 'very poorly', while only 15% said that 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>.

- 39% reported that their uniform items do not interact well together with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), while only 18% said their uniform items and PPE interact 'well'.

Uniform Functionality and Fit

- 58% of respondents from Northumbria Police disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose, higher than the average of 51% across England and Wales.
- 61% of respondents from Northumbria Police agreed that their uniform restricts their movement.
- 64% of respondents from Northumbria Police said their uniform is not good quality, while 67% of respondents from this force said their uniform does not fit well.
- Half (50%) of the respondents from Northumbria Police disagreed that their uniform is durable, while 24% agreed.
- 61% of respondents from Northumbria Police said their uniform is uncomfortable, while only one in five (19%) said that they are comfortable in their uniform.
- 77% of respondents from Northumbria Police disagreed that their uniform keeps them cool in summer, while only 9% agreed.
- 48% of respondents from Northumbria Police said their uniform does not keep them warm in winter, while 61% disagreed that their uniform is waterproof.

Uniform Items

- 69% of respondents from Northumbria Police reported wearing cargo trousers. Of these respondents, 80% said that this item contributes negatively to their experience of wearing uniform, higher than the national average of 69%.
- 70% of respondents who wear general purpose body armour (GPBA) said it contributes to a negative uniform experience, while 63% who wear ballistic body armour and 64% who wear covert body armour said the same.

- 65% of those who wear general purpose trousers from Northumbria Police said that this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.
- 63% of respondents who wear a patrol helmet and 52% of respondents who wear a bowler hat from Northumbria Police said that these items contribute to a negative uniform experience.
- 58% of those who wear a dress shirt and 50% of those who wear a polo shirt from Northumbria Police said that these items contribute to a negative uniform experience.
- 55% of respondents who wear a utility belt from Northumbria Constabulary said this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.

Uniform Access and Stores

- A third (33%) of respondents from Northumbria Police said that obtaining new uniform items is 'easy' or 'extremely easy', while 46% of respondents said it is 'difficult' or 'extremely difficult'.
- 50% of respondents from Northumbria Police reported that they have visited their local uniform store.
- The remaining respondents indicated the following reasons for not visiting a store: 16% said it is not an option to visit, 14% did not know it was an option, and 15% said they are not allowed to visit.
- Among those who had visited a store, 26% reported that items were not available in their size, and 20% said some but not all items were available in their size.
- Most respondents from Northumbria Police received the items they ordered within weeks (45%), 32% received items within three months, and 8% faced long wait times of three to six months.

Uniform Cost

- 76% of respondents from Northumbria Police agreed that cost drives uniform decisions, while only 3% disagreed.

Perception of Uniform

- 44% of respondents from Northumbria Police feel professional in their uniform, lower than the average across England and Wales of 51%. 34% said they do not feel professional in their uniform.
- 29% of respondents from Northumbria Police feel they look smart in their uniform, while 44% feel they do not look smart.
- 43% of respondents from Northumbria Police feel proud in their uniform, while 28% said they do not feel proud in their uniform.

Uniform and Health and Wellbeing

- 58% of respondents from Northumbria 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, 87% of female respondents from Northumbria Police reported at least one health condition they believe is caused or made worse by their uniform, compared to 62% of male respondents from this force.
- 32% of respondents from Northumbria Police agreed that their uniform affects their relationship with their body.
- 12% of respondents from Northumbria Police agreed that their uniform affects their mental wellbeing, while 16% said their emotional wellbeing has been affected.

Complaints and Sick Leave

- 42% of respondents from Northumbria Police said they had made a uniform-related complaint.
- For two thirds (66%) of these complaints, no action was taken.
- 3% of respondents from Northumbria Police have taken time off work due to the negative effects of uniform, lower than the national average of 5%.
- 52% of respondents from Northumbria Police said that although they had experienced negative effects due to wearing their uniform, they did not take sick leave.
- Reasons for not taking sick leave at Northumbria Police included worries that taking sick leave would negatively affect work opportunities (12%), a lack of perceived empathy from line managers (8%), and negative attitudes in the force (6%).

Uniform Impact on Retention and Role Choices

- 9% of respondents from Northumbria 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

- 47% of respondents from Northumbria Constabulary agreed that there should be a national uniform across England and Wales, while 20% disagreed, and 33% feel neutral.

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

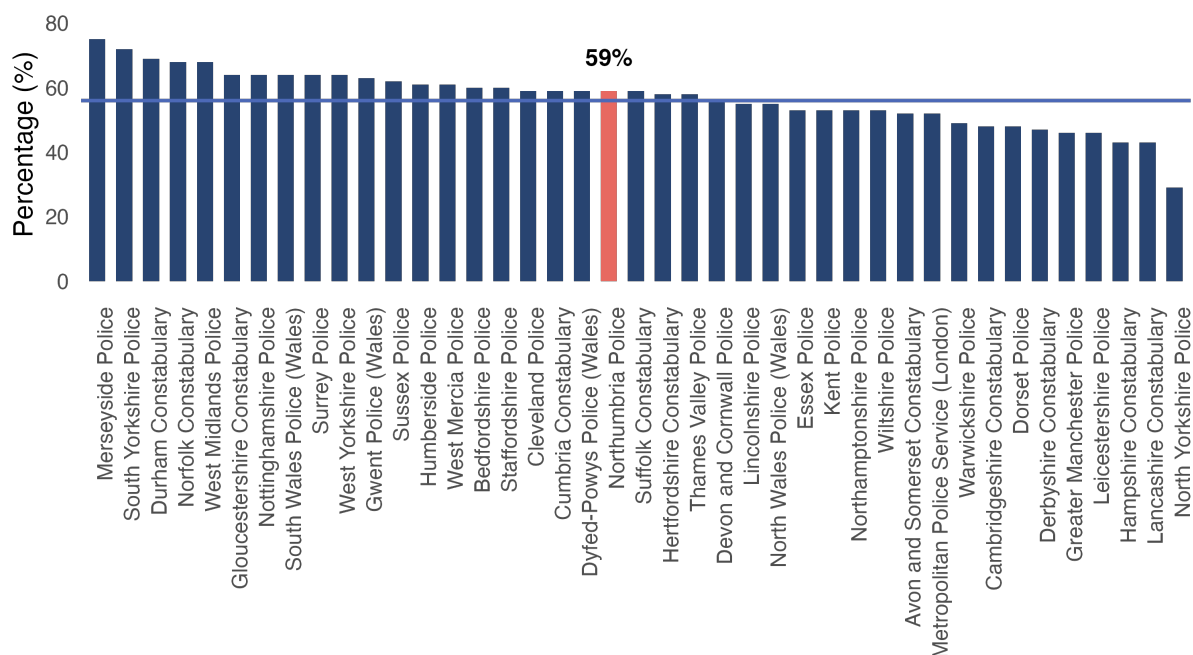


Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose.

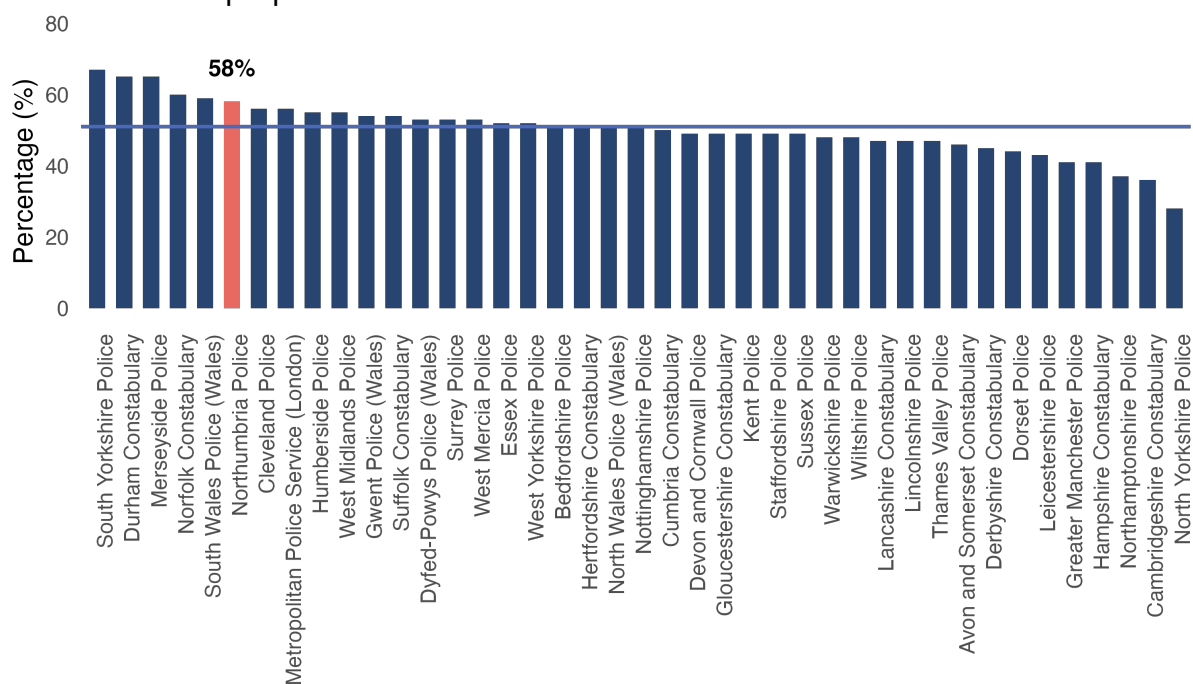


Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who reported one or more physical health conditions they believe to have been caused or made worse by their uniform.

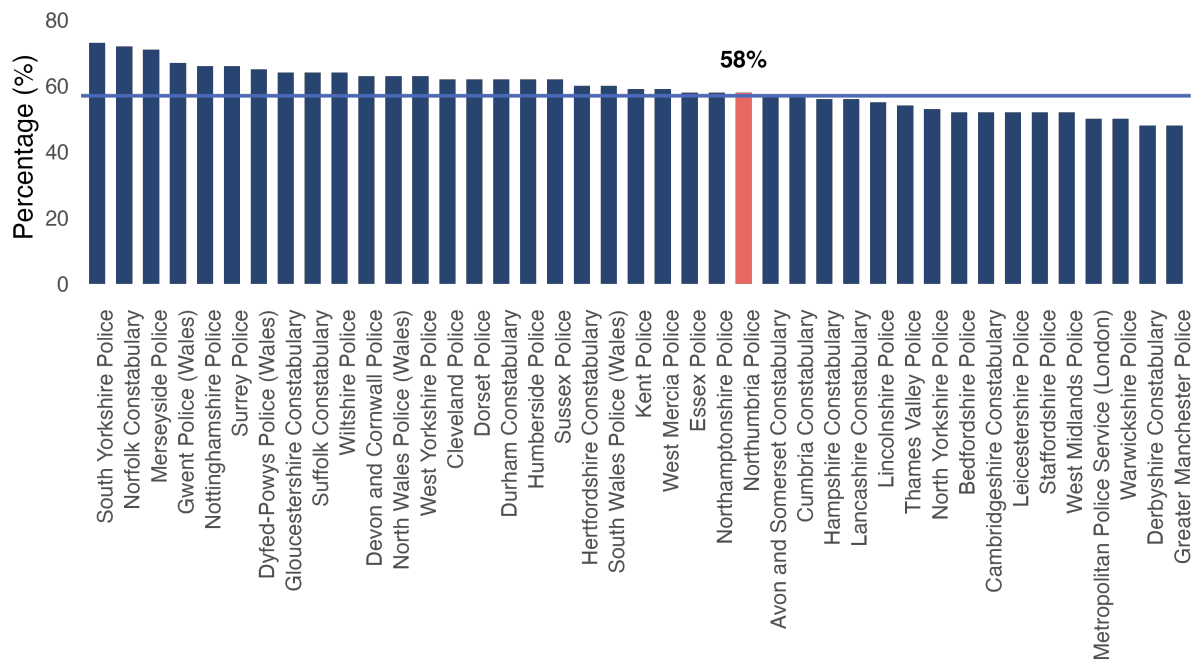


Figure 4: Proportion of uniform-related complaints where no action was taken.

