



## National Uniform & Equipment Survey 2024

# Essex 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 Essex Police<sup>1</sup>. National results and additional information are available in the main report **here**.

### Respondents and Response Rate

- 486 responses were recorded from Essex Police, representing a response rate<sup>2</sup> of approximately 7% (based on March 2024 total police force headcount)<sup>3</sup>.
- 86% of respondents are police officers, and 14% are police staff.
- 30% of respondents identified as female, 52% as male, and 18% did not specify their sex.

### Overall Uniform Experience

- 53% of respondents from Essex Police said their experience of wearing uniform is 'negative' or 'extremely negative', slightly lower than the 56% average across the 43 forces in England and Wales.
- 22% of respondents from Essex Police said their experience is 'positive', while 25% stated they have a 'neutral' experience.
- 37% of respondents from Essex Police said their uniform items interact together 'poorly' or 'very poorly', while only 16% said their uniform items interact 'well'.
- 29% said their uniform items do not interact well together with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), while 23% said their uniform and PPE interact 'well'.

---

<sup>1</sup>Note 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.

<sup>2</sup>Response 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.

<sup>3</sup>Home 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>.

## Uniform Functionality and Fit

- 52% of respondents from Essex Police disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose.
- 70% of respondents from Essex Police agreed that their uniform restricts their movement, higher than the 64% average.
- Over half (52%) of respondents from Essex Police said their uniform is not good quality, while 59% of respondents from this force said their uniform does not fit well.
- 39% of respondents from Essex Police disagreed that their uniform is durable, while a third of respondents (33%) agreed.
- 59% of respondents from Essex Police said their uniform is uncomfortable, while 18% said they are comfortable in their uniform.
- 78% of respondents from Essex Police disagreed that their uniform keeps them cool in summer, while only 6% agreed.
- 38% of respondents from Essex Police agreed that their uniform keeps them warm in winter, compared with 36% who disagreed. However, two thirds of respondents (66%) disagreed that their uniform is waterproof.

## Uniform Items

- Three quarters (75%) of respondents from Essex Police reported wearing general purpose trousers. Of these respondents, 85% said this item contributes negatively to their experience of wearing uniform.
- 42% of those who wear general purpose trousers from Essex Police said that this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.
- 57% of respondents who wear a bowler hat and 51% who wear a patrol helmet from Essex Police said that these items contribute to a negative uniform experience.

- Almost half (49%) of respondents who wear general purpose body armour (GPBA) said it contributes to a negative uniform experience, while 46% of those who wear a utility vest said this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.

## Uniform Access and Stores

- 41% of respondents from Essex Police said that obtaining new uniform items is 'easy' or 'extremely easy', while 38% said it is 'difficult' or 'extremely difficult'.
- 81% of respondents from Essex Police reported that they have visited their local uniform store.
- The remaining respondents indicated the following reasons for not visiting a store: 8% did not know it was an option, and 5% said it is too far to travel to.
- Among those who had visited a store, 64% stated that all required items were available in their size, 20% said some but not all items were available in their size, and 16% reported that items were not available in their size.
- Most respondents from Essex Police received the items they ordered within weeks (45%), 23% received items within three months, and 19% received items within days.

## Uniform Cost

- 73% of respondents from Essex Police agreed that cost drives uniform decisions, while only 2% disagreed.

## Perception of Uniform

- 55% of respondents from Essex Police feel they look professional in their uniform, slightly higher than the average across England and Wales of 51%. However, 16% said they do not feel professional in their uniform.

- 41% of respondents from Essex Police feel they look smart in their uniform, while 28% feel they do not look smart.
- 52% of respondents from Essex Police feel proud in their uniform, while 16% said they do not feel proud in their uniform.

## Uniform and Health and Wellbeing

- 58% of respondents from Essex 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, 84% of female respondents from Essex Police reported at least one health condition they believe is caused or made worse by their uniform, compared to 61% of male respondents from this force.
- 36% of respondents from Essex Police agreed that their uniform affects their relationship with their body.
- 18% respondents from Essex Police agreed that their uniform affects their mental wellbeing, while 17% agreed that their emotional wellbeing has been effected due to their uniform.

## Complaints and Sick Leave

- 29% of respondents from Essex Police said they had made a uniform-related complaint.
- For 71% of these complaints, no action was taken.
- 3% of respondents from Essex Police have taken time off work due to the negative effects of uniform, slightly lower than the national average of 5%.
- 45% of respondents from Essex 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 Essex Police included worries that taking uniform-related sick leave would affect work opportunities (10%), negative attitudes in the force (9%), and a lack of perceived empathy from line managers (5%).

## **Uniform Impact on Retention and Role Choices**

- 11% of respondents from Essex 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 Essex Police agreed that there should be a national uniform across England and Wales, while 22% disagreed, and 33% feel neutral.

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

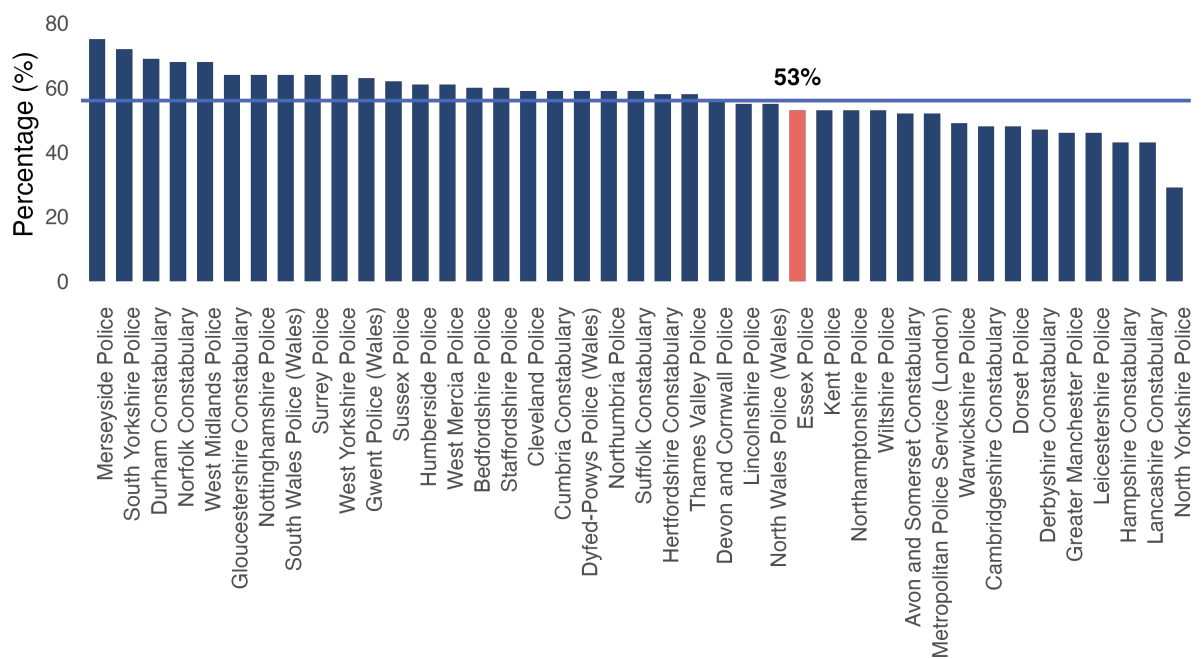


Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose.

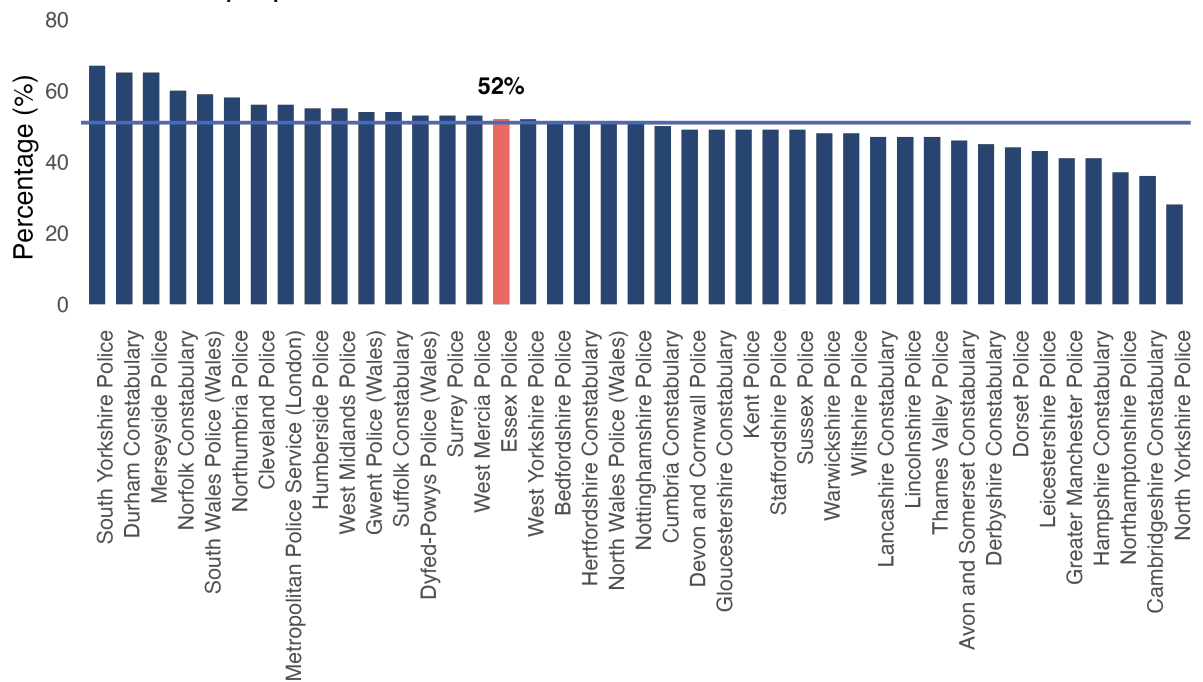


Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who reported one or more physical health conditions they believe to have been caused or made worse by their uniform.

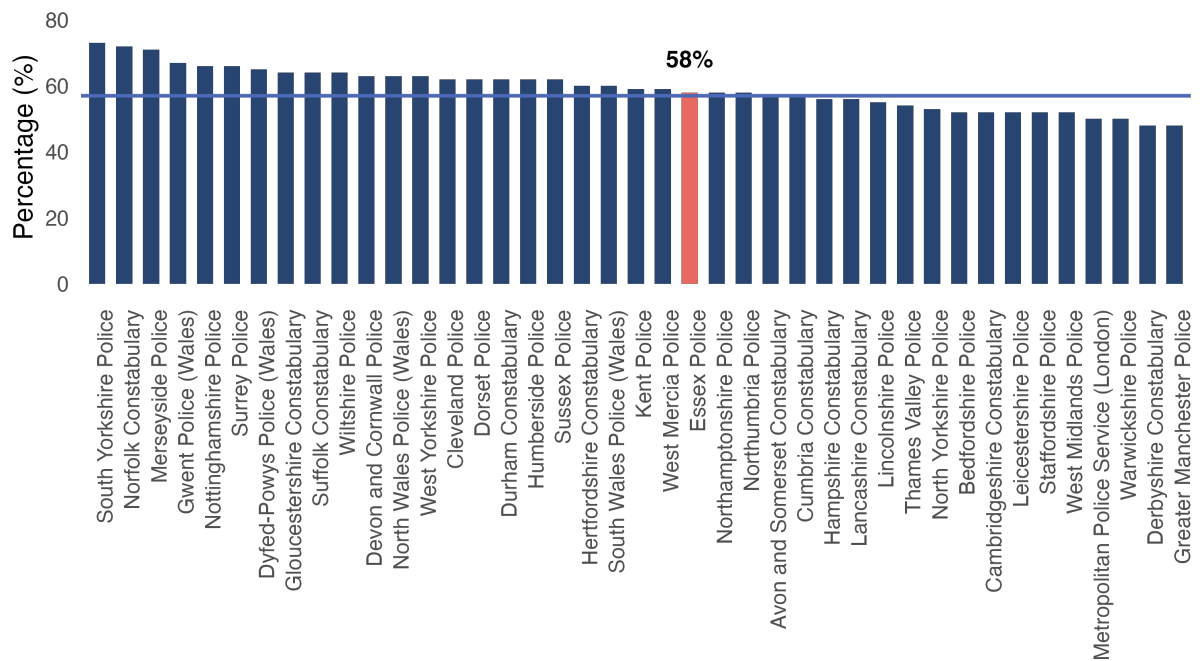


Figure 4: Proportion of uniform-related complaints where no action was taken.

