



National Uniform & Equipment Survey 2024

West Midlands 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 West Midlands Police¹. National results and additional information are available in the main report **here**.

Respondents and Response Rate

- 490 responses were recorded from West Midlands Police, representing a response rate² of approximately 4% (based on March 2024 total police force headcount)³.
- 98% of respondents are police officers, and 2% are police staff.
- 18% of respondents identified as female, 57% as male, and 24% did not specify their sex.

Overall Uniform Experience

- 68% of respondents from West Midlands Police said their experience of wearing uniform is 'negative' or 'extremely negative', higher than the 56% average across the 43 forces in England and Wales.
- 13% of respondents from West Midlands Police said their experience is 'positive', while 18% stated they have a 'neutral' experience.
- 53% of respondents from West Midlands Police said their uniform items interact together 'poorly' or 'very poorly', while just 11% of respondents 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>.

- 44% reported that their uniform items do not interact well together with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), while 15% said their uniform and PPE interact 'well'.

Uniform Functionality and Fit

- Over half (55%) of respondents from West Midlands Police disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose, while only 17% of respondents agreed.
- Three quarters (75%) of respondents from West Midlands Police agreed that their uniform restricts their movement, higher than the 64% average. Only one in ten (10%) respondents disagreed.
- 65% of respondents from West Midlands Police disagreed that their uniform is good quality, while 69% of respondents from this force said their uniform does not fit well.
- 55% of respondents from West Midlands Police disagreed that their uniform is durable, while 22% agreed.
- 70% of respondents from West Midlands Police said that their uniform is uncomfortable, while only 12% said they are comfortable in their uniform.
- 76% of respondents from West Midlands Police disagreed that their uniform keeps them cool in summer, while only 5% agreed.
- 43% of respondents from West Midlands Police disagreed that their uniform keeps them warm in winter, and 56% disagreed that their uniform is waterproof.

Uniform Items

- 84% of respondents who wear general purpose trousers from West Midlands Police said this item contributes to a negative uniform experience.
- 61% of respondents from West Midlands Police reported wearing cargo trousers. Of these respondents, 69% said this item contributes negatively to their experience of wearing uniform.

- 79% of respondents who wear general purpose body armour (GPBA) said it contributes to a negative uniform experience, while 79% of those who wear ballistic body armour, and 48% of those who wear covert body armour said the same.
- 60% of respondents who wear a bowler hat and 64% who wear a patrol helmet from West Midlands Police said these items contribute to a negative uniform experience.
- 51% of respondents who wear a utility vest and 46% of respondents who wear a polo shirt from West Midlands Police said that these items negatively impact their experience of wearing uniform.

Uniform Access and Stores

- Only 16% of respondents from West Midlands Police said that obtaining new uniform items is 'easy' or 'extremely easy', while two thirds (66%) of respondents said it is 'difficult' or 'extremely difficult'.
- 62% of respondents from West Midlands Police reported that they have visited their local uniform store.
- The remaining respondents indicated the following reasons for not visiting a store: 13% did not know it was an option, 12% said it is not an option to visit, and 9% said they are not allowed to visit.
- Among those who had visited a store, 30% reported that items were not available in their size, and 21% said some but not all items were available in their size.
- Most respondents from West Midlands Police received the items they ordered within three months (40%), 29% received items within weeks, 18% faced long wait times of three to six months, and 8% waited six months or longer.

Uniform Cost

- 78% of respondents from West Midlands Police agreed that cost drives uniform decisions, while only 4% disagreed.

Perception of Uniform

- 37% of respondents from West Midlands Police feel professional in their uniform, significantly lower than the average across England and Wales of 51%. However, 40% of respondents said they do not feel professional in their uniform.
- Almost half (48%) of respondents from West Midlands Police feel they do not look smart in their uniform, while 24% feel they do feel smart.
- 42% of respondents from West Midlands Police feel proud in their uniform, while 31% said they do not feel proud in their uniform.

Uniform and Health and Wellbeing

- 52% of respondents from West Midlands 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, 85% of female respondents from West Midlands 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.
- 41% of respondents from West Midlands Police agreed that their uniform affects their relationship with their body.
- One in five (20%) respondents from West Midlands Police agreed that their uniform affects their mental wellbeing, while 22% agreed that their emotional wellbeing has been effected.

Complaints and Sick Leave

- 36% of respondents from West Midlands Police said they had made a uniform-related complaint.
- For 77% of these complaints, no action was taken.
- 6% of respondents from West Midlands Police have taken time off work due to the negative effects of uniform, slightly higher than the national average of 5%.
- 52% of respondents from West Midlands 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 West Midlands Police included worries that taking sick leave would negatively affect work opportunities (12%), negative attitudes in the force (6%), a lack of perceived empathy from line managers (5%).

Uniform Impact on Retention and Role Choices

- 18% of respondents from West Midlands 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

- 52% of respondents from West Midlands Police agreed that there should be a national uniform across England and Wales, while 17% disagreed, and 31% feel neutral.

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

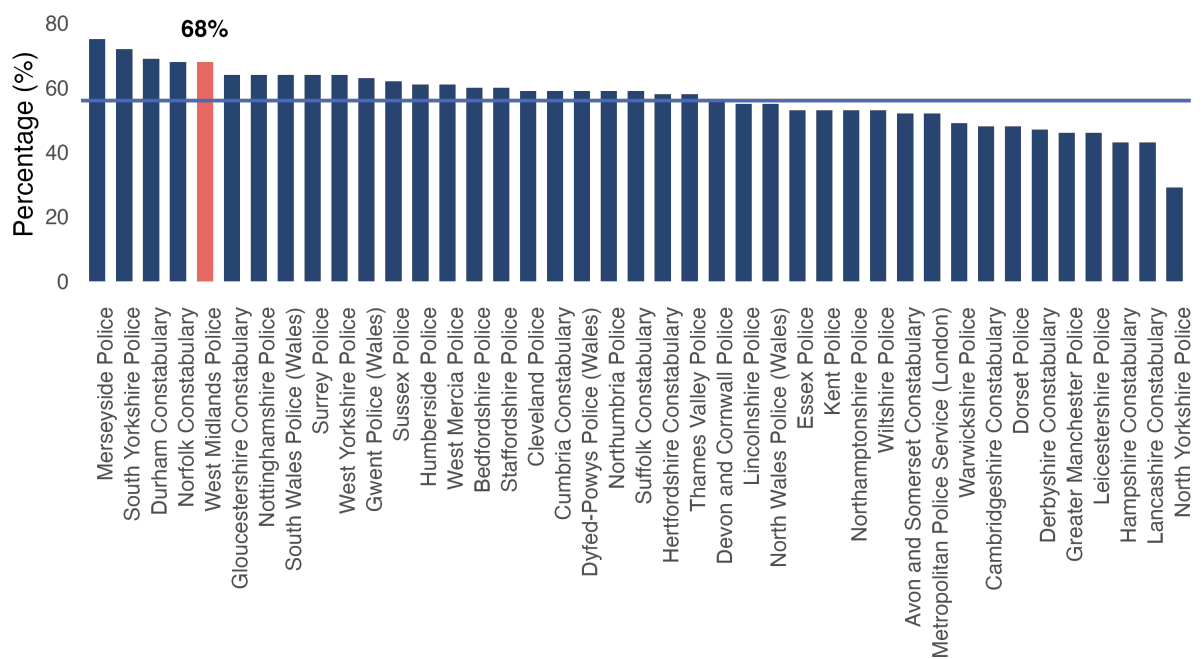


Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed that their uniform is fit for purpose.

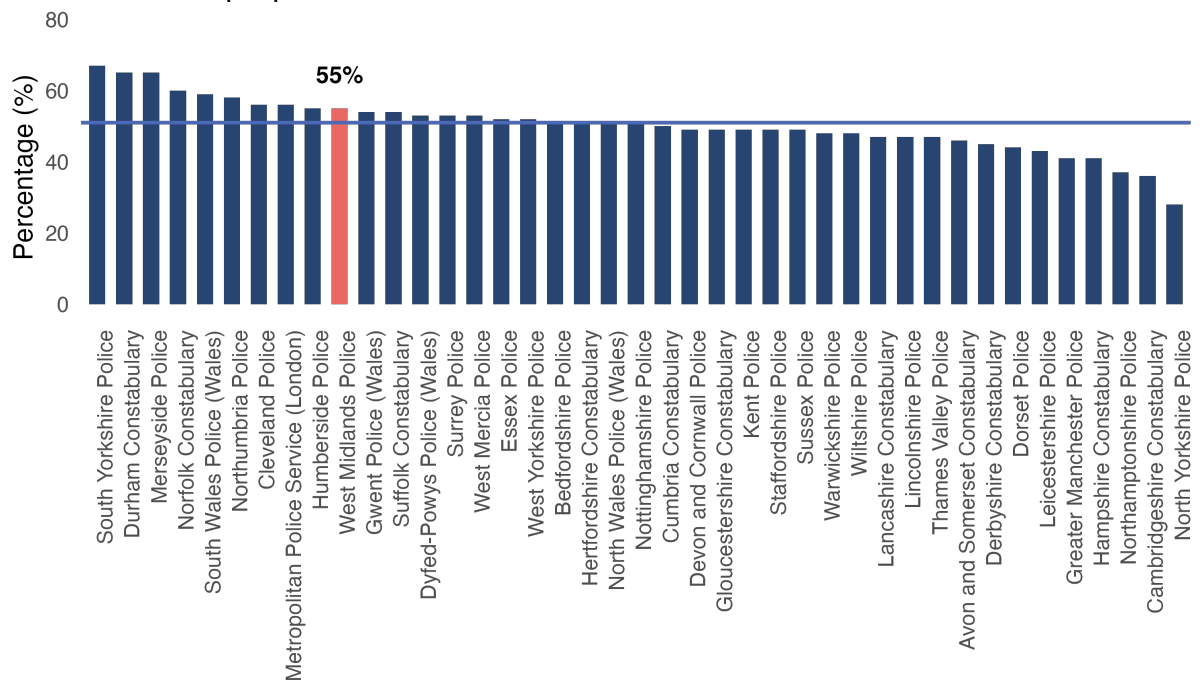


Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who reported one or more physical health conditions they believe to have been caused or made worse by their uniform.

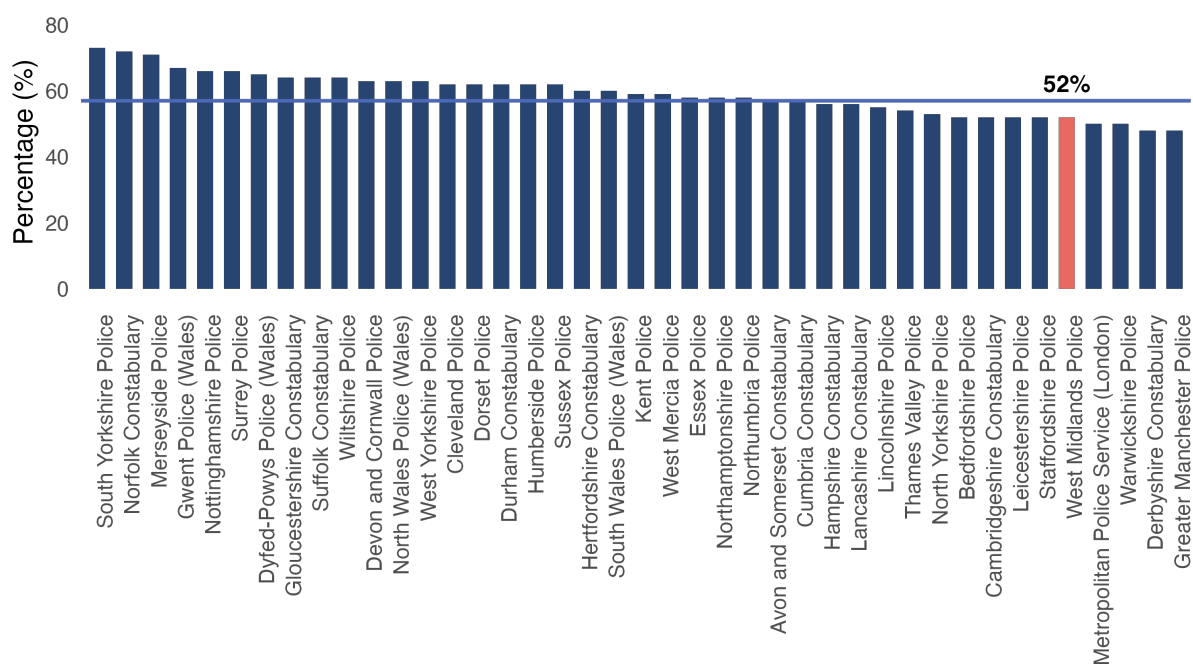


Figure 4: Proportion of uniform-related complaints where no action was taken.

