

The UK & Wales National Police Wellbeing Survey 2025

Leapwise 2025. [National Police Wellbeing Survey 2025: National Insights Report](#). Prepared on behalf of Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service.

Leapwise 2025. [National Police Wellbeing Survey 2025: Deep Dive: Drivers of Wellbeing Report](#). Prepared on behalf of Oscar Kilo, the National Police Wellbeing Service.

Introduction

The National Police Wellbeing Survey (NPWS) 2025 is an annual survey to generate understanding of the wellbeing, mental health, and workplace experiences of police officers and staff across England and Wales.

The survey itself has been running for several years and in that time has become the central tool for tracking trends, identifying pressures, and informing national wellbeing initiatives. The design and implementation were led by the College of Policing and the National Police Wellbeing Service (as part of the *Oscar Kilo* program).

This digest summarises the 'Insight Report' and 'Depth Report'. Individual 'Local Reports' for participating forces were also developed.

Aims

The NPWS has four core aims:

- To empower the workforce to raise concerns and highlight opportunities for improvement.
- To inspire and inform action to improve the workplace, police wellbeing and, ultimately, the service provided to the public.
- To track the possible impact of improvement actions taken by forces, as well as wider environmental changes over time.
- To reduce complexity in the survey landscape by becoming the central reference point for understanding police wellbeing and workforce issues, thereby easing survey fatigue across the service.

The tool

Its framework covers a broad range of interconnected themes, organised around the following questions:

1. Workforce experiences with policing work (wellbeing and engagement)
2. how well supported the workforce feels (work and manager support, resources and support services, organisational climate, and service leadership).



Methodology

Design: The survey was designed through extensive consultation with the service and via reviewing comparable public-sector workforce surveys.

Implementation:

- The survey ran over four weeks, from 19 May to 16 June 2025;
- 31 police forces actively participated, across 31 participating territorial and non-territorial forces;
- Respondents spanned all roles and ranks: 21,876 police officers, 16,155 police staff, 1,155 PCSOs, 203 special constables and 93 volunteer staff, and;
- It received 40,986 valid responses nationally, representing a record 25.4% response rate among participating forces. 21 forces achieving response rates above 15%.

Noting and addressing bias:

- Results are only representative of the 31 participating forces, not all 43 territorial forces across England and Wales;
- Subgroup estimates carry wide confidence intervals (as high as $\pm 14\%$) so should be treated cautiously. In particular, small sample sizes include Assistant Chief Constable and above ($n=49$), Superintendents ($n=267$) and Specials & Volunteers ($n=296$).
- To ensure results are representative of the true workforce composition, responses were weighted using an iterative proportional fitting (raking) method across force, role, function, length of service, sex and ethnicity, using NPCC workforce statistics from May 2025. Weights were capped at the 99th percentile to limit the influence of individual responses.

Data cleaning: Excluded non-consenting participants and checked for anomalies such as very fast completion times, repeated identical answers, and inconsistent responses to validation questions.

Benchmarking: Results were benchmarked, where possible, against the most recent comparable workforce surveys available: the NHS Staff Survey 2024, the Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2025, and the Civil Service People Survey 2024. Comparisons were more indicative than systematic because question sets and survey timing differed across the other workforce surveys.

INSIGHTS REPORT FINDINGS

Results

- **4.9** was the overall Wellbeing index score (out of 10)
- **5.3** was the overall Engagement index score (out of 10)
- **4.0** was the Service Leadership index score (out of 10)
- **-54%** was the employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) for policing as a whole



Key findings

1. Wellbeing is a serious and worsening concern

Overall wellbeing scored just 4.9 out of 10, the lowest of all thematic indices alongside Service Leadership. These issues are markedly worse for operational frontline officers and lower ranks:

- **55%** felt fatigued or physically exhausted by work often or always
- **46%** found their work emotionally exhausting often or always (vs 34% in the NHS)
- **45%** felt burnt out because of their job often or always (vs 30% in the NHS)
- **35%** came to work despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties

2. Assault, discrimination and cultural challenges

Exposure to assault and discrimination from the public is widespread and support after reporting was felt to be only moderate:

- 44% of officers and 39% of specials were assaulted by a member of the public in the past year, with 79% of assaults formally reported but only a 5/10 average satisfaction score with the support received.
- 17% of the workforce experienced discrimination from the public, and 12% from within the organisation; the majority of internal discrimination and bullying/harassment incidents (58% and 46% respectively) go unreported, mainly because staff believe no action will be taken.
- 16% experienced bullying or harassment at work; of those, only 20% were satisfied with support received and just 12% with the action taken.

3. Organisational stressors and resources

Workload, training, software and change management were identified as significant hindrance stressors:

- 55% of the workforce (68% of officers) felt they face unrealistic time pressures. 60% reported they found it difficult to take enough breaks.
- Only 49% felt they can access the right learning and development opportunities when needed (vs 60% in the NHS, 68% in the Civil Service). Only 43% feel completed training improved their performance.
- 41% are dissatisfied with the standard of software and IT systems.
- Only 15% feel that change is managed well in their force, markedly lower than the Civil Service (32%) or armed forces (24%).

4. Strengths: teams, managers and personal commitment

Despite these pressures, the survey highlights genuine strengths, specifically:

- High confidence in their own skills (89% vs 85–87% in other sectors)



- Strong team trust and belonging (68% feel a strong sense of belonging within their team, vs 61% in the NHS)
- Sense of solid line manager support (comparable to or above other public sectors on most measures).
- Two in three felt a sense of personal accomplishment from their work
- Most felt their service makes a positive difference to the public.

5. Low advocacy and high intention to leave

Employee advocacy for policing as a career is markedly lower than in comparable sectors:

- The employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) for policing is –54%, far below government (–24%), education (–1%) and non-profit (+5%) benchmarks.
- Around 29% of the workforce reported an intention to leave their force or policing within the next year, with poor work-life balance (17%), pay and benefits (15%), and poor leadership (13%) cited as the leading reasons.

6. Rank, role and demographic gaps

Officers, and constables and sergeants in particular, consistently report the lowest scores across every thematic area, while specials, volunteers and senior ranks report the highest.

- 67% of officers reported physical exhaustion (vs 39% of staff), and constables and sergeants recorded the highest exhaustion and burnout of any rank.
- Only 26% of constables believe senior leaders' actions are consistent with organisational values, compared with 88% of ACC-and-above officers.
- Only 27% of constables feel they would be supported if they made a genuine mistake, versus 87% of ACCs and above.

Underrepresented groups also report worse outcomes on several measures, including those with a disability or long-term health condition, those with an acquired gender, and LGB+ colleagues.

7. Leadership and confidence in the future

Service Leadership scored the lowest of all thematic indices (4.0/10). Only 33% of the workforce feel positive about the future of their force, and just 19% believe senior leaders will act on the survey's findings. Among officers, confidence is even lower at only 11%.

DEPTH REPORT FINDINGS

Based on the survey data, further analysis identified the following factors as the key drivers of wellbeing in the police workforce.

- **Workload pressure:** Difficulty taking breaks and persistent time pressure are major contributors to burnout and emotional fatigue.



- **Organisational support:** Support for emotionally demanding work and work-life balance is critical; internal workload management, rather than external demand, is the primary issue.
- **Workplace misconduct:** Bullying, harassment and assault (from the public or colleagues) have significant and lasting impacts on victims' wellbeing.
- **Fairness of pay:** Perceived pay inequity lowers wellbeing, particularly among officers.
- **Health and duties:** Staff with long-term health conditions or on adjusted/recuperative duties report markedly lower wellbeing.
- **Age and length of service:** Wellbeing declines sharply in the early years of service but improves with age and tenure. New recruits begin with high wellbeing that drops within three years.
- **Team dynamics:** Those on limited duties report poorer belonging, inclusion and constructive disagreement within teams.

Additional insights

- Officers report lower wellbeing than staff, driven by breaks, pay, work-life balance and exposure to assault.
- Differences between frontline and support roles are largely explained by workload and work-life balance.
- Intention to stay drops steeply within the first three years of service, especially for officers.
- Variation across forces shows that solutions exist; stronger outcomes under similar conditions highlight the importance of how work is organised and led.

Solutions

The depth report identified the following 'solution spaces' for some of the identified wellbeing challenges.

Key drivers	Solution domains
✓ Workload	• Strategy & planning • Demand management & prevention • Workforce planning
✓ Organisational support (from leaders, line managers and teams)	• Leadership development • Strategy & planning • Wellbeing support/ OH
✓ Personal experiences of workplace misconduct	• Leadership development (psychological safety focus) • Recruitment & vetting • Professional standards policy & practice
✓ Age & length of service	
✓ Experiencing a long-term health condition or on limited duties	• Wellbeing support/ OH • Workforce planning



Conclusion

The National Police Wellbeing Survey 2025 confirms serious and pressing challenges across policing in Wales and the UK. Pressures hit operational frontline officers and those in junior ranks the hardest and are compounded by low confidence in leadership, weak organisational recognition, and gaps in psychological safety. At the same time, the survey identifies strong team cohesion, solid line manager relationships, and a workforce that remains highly skilled, committed and motivated by a sense of purpose. They are real strengths that can be built on.

A repeat survey was done in May 2026 to track progress, and several new initiatives have been launched, such as a Mental Health Crisis Line for policing and Workforce Prioritisation Guidance. Strategy planning continues for improving this situation, though only a minority of the workforce have faith that senior leaders will act on the survey results.