



Report on Police Officer Satisfaction with Services provided by the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland

**Annual Survey
2024/25**

Published June 2025

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Introduction

This is an Official Statistics publication. Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. They undergo regular validation checks to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

The Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (the Office) was set up by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 in order to provide an independent system for investigating complaints about the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Police Ombudsman is committed to providing an independent and impartial investigation process of the highest quality, which is timely and secures the confidence of both the public and police.

This report presents the findings from the Police Officer Satisfaction Survey conducted over the three week time period 14th April 2025 to the 02nd May 2025. It includes information collected from officers who were subject of an investigation which was subsequently closed during 2024/25 and compares the findings to results obtained for the previous years¹. Throughout this report when there is reference made to officers/police officers the reader should be aware that this includes civilian staff (designated civilians). Civilian staff became direct employees of the PSNI in September 2017, therefore complaints about these civilian staff members are recorded as complaints about the PSNI.

In this report, comparisons have been made between the results for this year's survey, see Appendix 1: Results, Page 8, and the results obtained for previous years which are available in the "Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet – Police Officer Survey 2024/25"². Comparisons for previous year's surveys have already been detailed in reports published in that particular reporting year. These reports are all available on the Office's website (details are on the back page of this report).

¹ This is the tenth year that the police officer satisfaction survey was carried out electronically; therefore comparisons can only be made with the previous nine years. The survey was not carried out in 2019/20 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of the Office.

² The Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet is available on our [website](#).

Main Findings

- Officers had positive views of Ombudsman staff with regards to how they were treated, both respectfully and fairly. They also felt our staff were easy to understand and knowledgeable.
- Officers were more likely to be satisfied with the manner in which they were treated, the explanation of the process and the clarity of our correspondence than they were for the frequency of updates and overall time taken to resolve the complaint.
- Just over seven out of ten officers surveyed felt their complaint was dealt with independently.
- Just over half of the officers surveyed felt the police complaints system makes the police more accountable.

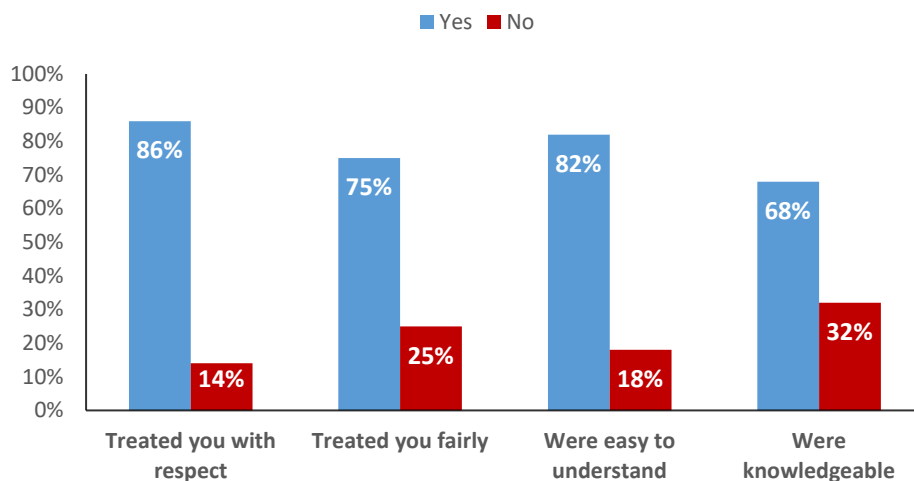
Results

Perception of Ombudsman staff

Police officers were asked if they spoke to a member of staff and, if they had, how staff had appeared to them in relation to a number of characteristics. In 2024/25, 70% of officers said that they had spoken to a member of staff and of these:

- Less than nine out of ten officers thought they were treated with respect,
- Three quarters thought they were treated fairly,
- Just over four fifths of officers thought staff were easy to understand and
- Less than seven out of ten officers thought staff were knowledgeable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Police officer perception of Ombudsman staff, 2024/25

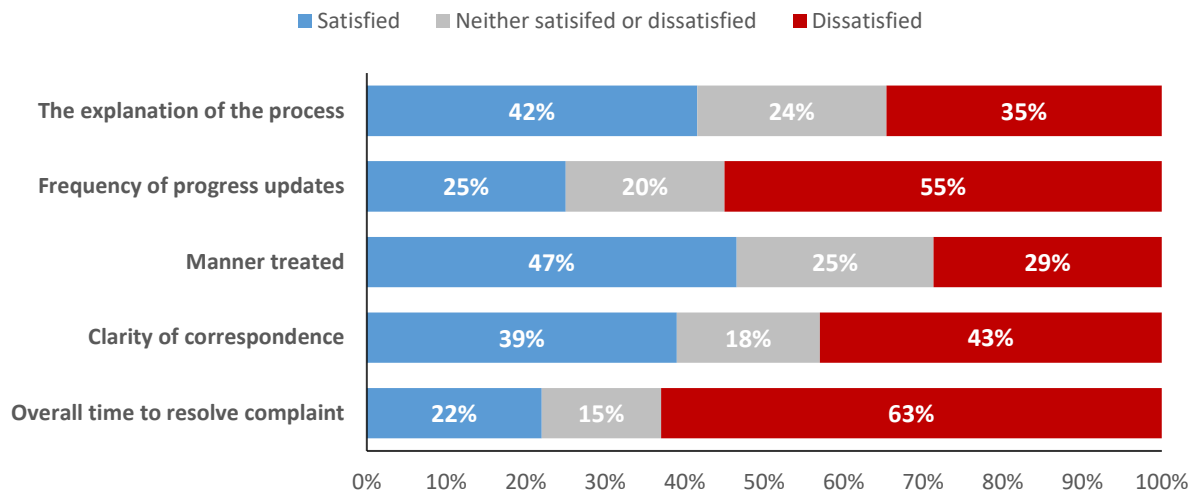


Results generally showed that the views of police officers in 2024/25, with respect to their perceptions of Ombudsman staff, were similar when compared with previous years. Although there was some fluctuation in results, officer's generally perceived staff more positively in the years prior to 2022/23. For 'Ease of Understanding' and 'Knowledgeable', results obtained in 2024/25 were similar to those obtained in 2022/23 although they have increased slightly (See Appendix 1: Results, Table 1 and Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet 2024/25).

Level of satisfaction with aspects of the complaints process³

In 2024/25, as seen in previous years, a larger proportion of officers were satisfied with the manner in which they were treated, the explanation of the process and the clarity of correspondence than they were with the frequency of progress updates and the overall time taken to resolve the complaint (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Officer Satisfaction with aspects of the complaints process, 2024/25



- The proportion of officers satisfied with the explanation of the process in 2024/25 was similar when compared with the years between 2020/21 and 2023/24. Officers were more satisfied with this aspect of the complaints process in the five years leading up to and including 2018/19.
- The proportion of officers who were satisfied with the frequency of updates this year was similar to six out of the nine previous years. Officer satisfaction with this aspect of the process was higher in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2023/24.
- In 2024/25, the proportion of officers who were satisfied with the manner of treatment was similar to the previous four years. Results also show that officers tended to be more satisfied with this aspect of the process in earlier years i.e. the years prior to 2020/21.
- The views of police officers in 2024/25, with respect to the clarity of the correspondence, is similar when compared with previous years. Satisfaction with this aspect of the process was highest in 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- Officer satisfaction with the overall time taken to resolve their complaint has decreased when compared with last year and the years prior to 2020/21. In fact, officers were the most dissatisfied with this aspect of the complaints process in

³Note: Some of the changes in satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels observed may be as a result of increasing the Likert scale from three to five responses in 2017/18.

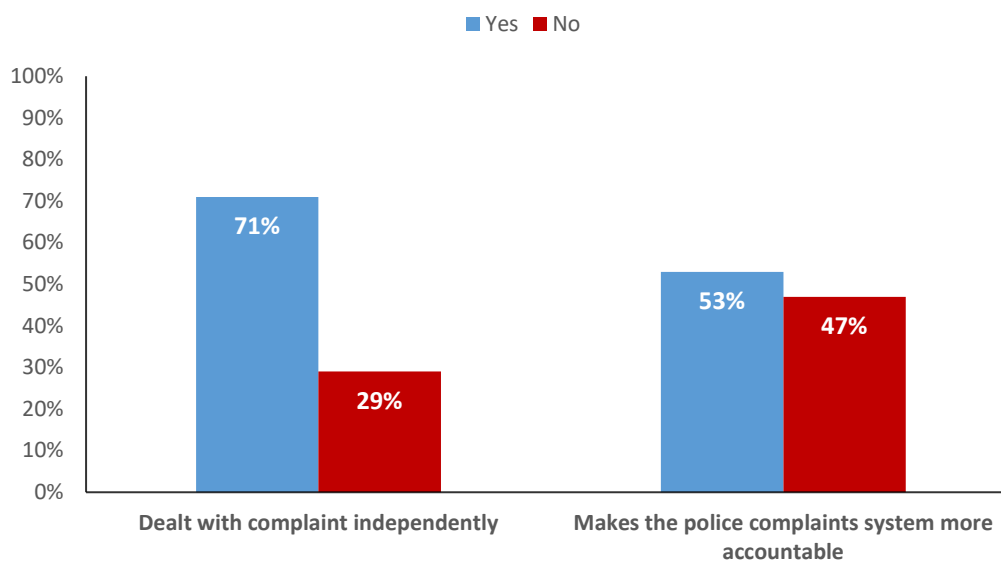
2024/25 than they were for eight out of the previous nine reporting years (See Appendix 1: Results, Table 2 and Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet 2024/25).

Independence and Accountability

In 2024/25:

- Just over seven in ten officers felt that the Police Ombudsman's Office dealt with their complaint independently.
- Just over half of officers felt that the police complaints system makes the police more accountable (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Deals with complaints independently and makes police more accountable, 2024/25



Independence

In 2024/25, the proportion of police officers who thought the Office dealt with the complaint made about them independently, was similar when compared with previous years. However, results for this were slightly higher in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2021/22.

Accountability

The proportion of officers that thought the police complaints system makes police more accountable was similar in 2024/25 when compared with the three previous years. Results were higher in 2014/15, 2015/16, 2018/19 and 2020/21 when compared with 2024/25 (See Appendix 1: Results, Table 3 and Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet 2024/25).

Additional comments

In addition to the five questions we ask in the survey, we also allow officers the chance to supply any additional information regarding their contact with our Office. This information gives us an insight into how officers feel about the overall complaints process. The comments may also highlight areas of concern and identify opportunities for service improvement,

As part of the 2024/25 survey we received 100 comments. After reviewing these, it was clear there were a number of key issues which officers were most unhappy about. These were the overall time taken to resolve their complaint and the apparent lack of updates/communication provided to them. We also received a number of comments mentioning our investigators, which although critical of some aspects of the process, detailed that staff remained respectful and treated the officer fairly.

Appendix 1: Results

Table 1: Police officer perception of Ombudsman staff, 2024/25.

Answer	Were you treated with respect?	Were you treated fairly?	Were staff easy to understand?	Were staff knowledgeable?
Yes	86%	75%	82%	68%
No	14%	25%	18%	32%
No. of respondents	148	148	148	148

Asked to officers who had spoken to a staff member

Table 2: Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with aspects of the complaints process, 2024/25.

Aspect	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No. of respondents
Explanation of the process	42%	24%	35%	212
Frequency of updates	25%	20%	55%	212
Manner of treatment	47%	25%	29%	212
Clarity of correspondence	39%	18%	43%	212
Overall time to resolve complaint	22%	15%	63%	212

Asked to all officers

Table 3: Independence and Accountability, 2024/25.

Answer	Did we deal with your complaint independently?	Do we make the complaints system more accountable?
Yes	71%	53%
No	29%	47%
No. of respondents	212	212

Asked to all officers

Appendix 2: Notes to readers

The survey

This is the tenth year the Office has carried out an electronic survey of police officers who had been the subject of an investigation which was subsequently closed during the reporting year i.e. complaints closed between 01st April 2024 and 31st March 2025. The identity of the officers surveyed at the end of 2024/25 was extracted from the Office's Case handling System (CHS).

Police Service of Northern Ireland software was used to carry out the survey with their Statistics Branch facilitating this on our behalf. A total of 683 officers were emailed a link to the survey and 212 responses were submitted. This represents a response rate of 31%.

The "Satisfied" category in Appendix 1: Table 2, includes the categories of "Very satisfied" and "Satisfied", while the category of "Not satisfied" includes "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied".

Data use:

The data collected are used by the Office to monitor and evaluate the service provided to those police officers who have been subject to a complaint and identify any issues that arise in a timely manner. This allows the Office to fulfil its statutory duty to secure the confidence of the police in the complaints handling process.

Appendix 3: Police Officer Satisfaction Survey Questions

Question 1:

Did you speak to a member of the Police Ombudsman's staff?

Answer 'Yes' or 'No'

If you spoke to a member of staff.....

Question 2:

Did you think the member of Police Ombudsman's staff...

- Treated you with respect
- Treated you fairly
- Were easy to understand
- Were knowledgeable

Answer 'Yes' or 'No'

Question 3:

How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with each of the following aspects of service?

- The explanation of the process given to you
- How often you were updated with progress
- The manner in which you were treated
- The clarity of our correspondence
- The overall time taken to resolve the complaint

Answer 'Very satisfied', 'Satisfied', 'Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', 'Dissatisfied' or 'Very dissatisfied'

Question 4:

Do you think we dealt with your complaint independently?

Answer 'Yes' or 'No'

Question 5:

Do you feel the police complaints system makes the police more accountable?

Answer 'Yes' or 'No'

If you have any further comments regarding your contact with the Police Ombudsman's Office, please detail them below.

Additional copies of this and other publications are available from:

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These publications and other information about the work of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland are also available on the Internet at:

Website: www.policeombudsman.org