



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

**Annual Survey
2025/26**

Published June 2026

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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 they meet customer needs and 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 complaints¹ 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 carried out between the 9th and 30th April 2026. It includes information collected from officers who were the subject of an investigation which was subsequently closed during 2025/26 and compares the findings to results obtained for the previous years². 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: Tables of Results, Page 8, and the results obtained for previous years. These results are included in the "Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet – Police Officer Survey 2025/26" which is available on the Office's website along with the reports for previous years (website address is detailed on the back page of this report).

¹ The Office's remit also extends to the Belfast Harbour Police, The Belfast International Airport Police, the Ministry of Defence Police, the National Crime Agency, 'serious' complaints regarding mutual aid police officers from Great Britain and 'serious' complaints regarding certain Home Office employees (immigration officers, designated customs officials and custom revenue officials).

² This is the eleventh year that the police officer satisfaction survey was carried out electronically; therefore, comparisons can only be made with the previous ten years. The survey was not carried out in 2019/20 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent closure of the Office.

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 overall time taken to resolve the complaint and the frequency of updates.
- 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.

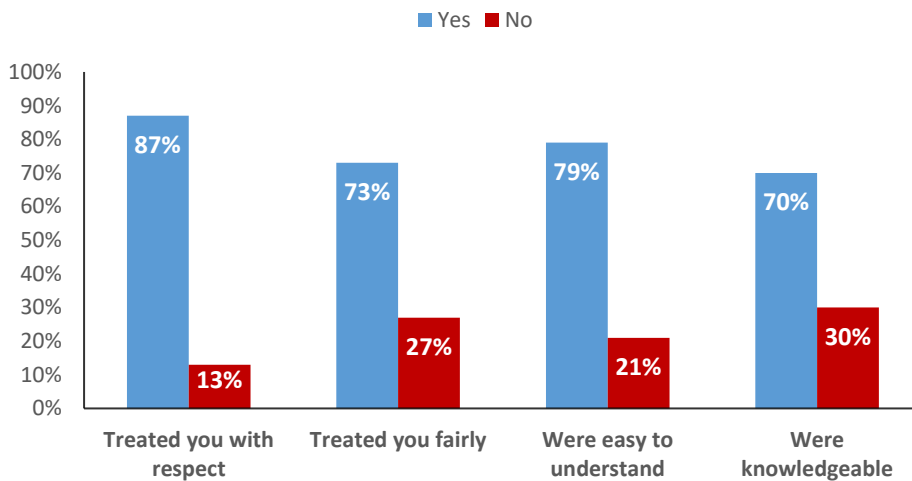
Survey Findings

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 2025/26, 68% of officers said that they had spoken to a member of staff and of these:

- Almost nine out of ten officers thought they were treated with respect,
- Just under three quarters thought they were treated fairly,
- Almost four fifths of officers thought staff were easy to understand and
- Seven out of ten officers thought staff were knowledgeable (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Police officer perception of Ombudsman staff, 2025/26

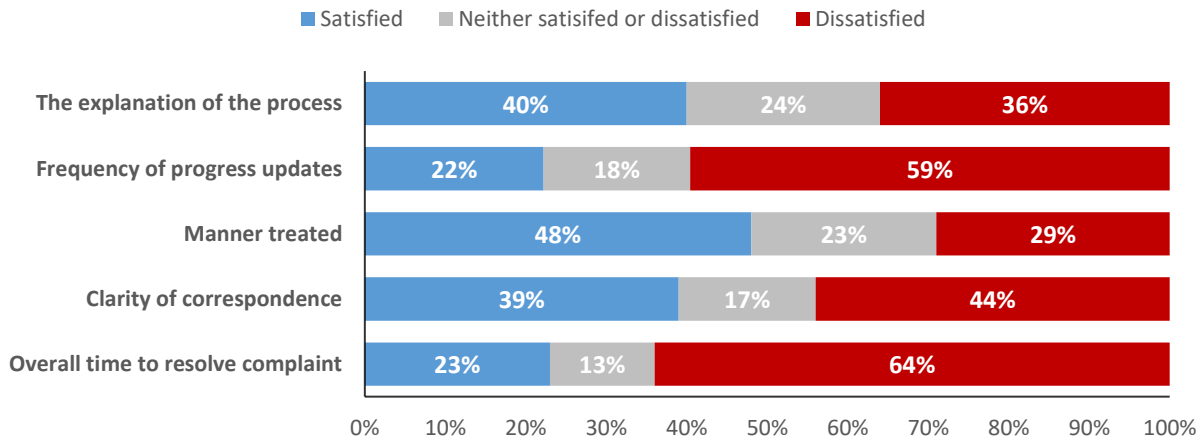


Results for this year showed that the views of police officers, with respect to their perception of being treated with respect, being treated fairly and belief that staff were knowledgeable, were similar when compared with previous years despite some slight fluctuations in the results obtained. For 'Ease of Understanding' the results obtained this year were similar to the previous three years however they were lower than those seen prior to 2022/23 (See Appendix 1: Tables of Results, Table 1 and Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet 2025/26).

Level of satisfaction with aspects of the complaints process³

In 2025/26, 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 overall time taken to resolve the complaint and the frequency of progress updates (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Officer Satisfaction with aspects of the complaints process, 2025/26



- The proportion of officers satisfied with the explanation of the process in 2025/26 was similar when compared with the previous four years. Officers were more satisfied with this aspect of the complaints process in the five years prior to 2020/21 (i.e. the pre-Covid/Office closure years).
- In 2025/26, the proportion of officers **dissatisfied** with the frequency of updates was similar to the levels reported in 2022/23 and 2024/25 but has increased when compared with all other years. Officer satisfaction was higher in 2015/16, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2023/24.
- In 2025/26, the proportion of officers who were satisfied with the manner in which they were treated was similar when compared with the previous five years i.e. 2020/21 to 2024/25. Satisfaction levels were higher for this aspect of the process in earlier years.
- The views of police officers in 2025/26, with respect to the clarity of the correspondence, was similar when compared with previous years. Satisfaction with this aspect of the process was highest in 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- As was seen with the frequency of updates, Officers were generally less satisfied with the overall time taken to resolve their complaint than for other aspects of the complaints process. In fact, officers were the most **dissatisfied** with this aspect

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

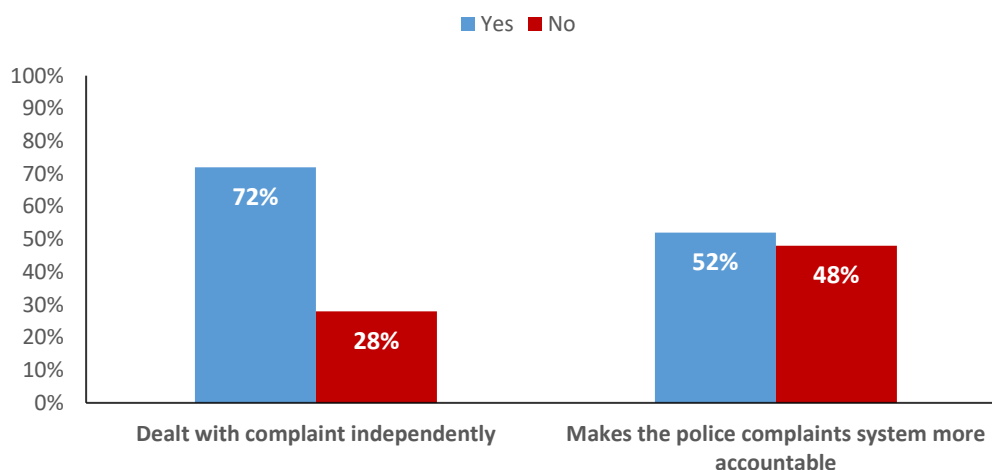
of the complaints process in 2025/26 than they were for eight out of the ten previous reporting years, the exceptions being 2022/23 and 2024/25 (See Appendix 1: Tables of Results, Table 2 and Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet 2025/26).

Independence and Accountability

In 2025/26:

- Just over seven out of 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, 2025/26



Independence

In 2025/26, the proportion of police officers who thought the Office dealt with their complaint independently, was similar when compared with previous years. However, a higher proportion of officers felt this way in 2014/15 and 2021/22.

Accountability

In 2025/26, the proportion of officers who felt the police complaints system makes police more accountable was similar when compared with previous years, although results were higher in 2014/15, 2015/16, 2018/19 and 2020/21 when compared with this year (See Appendix 1: Tables of Results, Table 3 and Accompanying Excel Spreadsheet 2025/26).

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 2025/26 survey, we received 100 useable 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. Some officers also questioned why the Office does not charge/penalise members of the public who make, what they perceive to be, frequent, vexatious or baseless complaints. We also received several 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: Tables of Results

Table 1: Police officer perception of Ombudsman staff, 2025/26.

Answer	Were you treated with respect?	Were you treated fairly?	Were staff easy to understand?	Were staff knowledgeable?
Yes	87%	73%	79%	70%
No	13%	27%	21%	30%
No. of respondents	149	149	149	149

Asked to officers who had spoken to a staff member

Table 2: Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction with aspects of the complaints process, 2025/26.

Aspect	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	No. of respondents
Explanation of the process	40%	24%	36%	218
Frequency of updates	22%	18%	59%	218
Manner of treatment	48%	23%	29%	218
Clarity of correspondence	39%	17%	44%	218
Overall time to resolve complaint	23%	13%	64%	218

Asked to all officers

Table 3: Independence and Accountability, 2025/26.

Answer	Did we deal with your complaint independently?	Do we make the complaints system more accountable?
Yes	72%	52%
No	28%	48%
No. of respondents	218	218

Asked to all officers

Appendix 2: Notes to readers

The survey

This is the eleventh 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 2025 and 31st March 2026. The identity of the officers surveyed at the end of 2025/26 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 710 officers were emailed a link to the survey and 218 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:

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