

# Northamptonshire Police Fire and Crime Commissioner:

## Precept & Public Confidence Consultation Results

December 2023 - January 2024



# Contents

<b>Background &amp; Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Survey Sample – Demographic Breakdown</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Sample Representativeness</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Survey Findings</b>	
<b>Northamptonshire Fire &amp; Rescue Service Precept Question</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>‘An increase of £5 per year for a Band D property would be equivalent to 6.8%, around 10p a week. In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views?’</i>	
<b>Can you tell us why you have given your answer?</b>	<b>7-8</b>
<b>How good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are doing?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Northamptonshire Police Precept Question</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>‘Policing has asked the Government for an increase in police precept of up to £15 In the next financial year. That would increase the rate for a Band D property to £308.04, an increase of 5.1% or an extra 29p per week for an average Band D property. In light of this, which one of the following statements best represents your views?’</i>	
<b>Have you got any further comments you would like to make about funding for Northamptonshire police?</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>How good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Police are doing?</b>	<b>13</b>

# Background

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is responsible for setting the police and fire precepts – that is the amount residents contribute towards local police and fire services through their council tax.

Around 18% of the council tax residents in Northamptonshire pay goes towards funding local police and fire services, the rest goes to local authorities. Total funding for police and fire services is made up of the precept and central government grants.

Each year, the PFCC consults with the public to ask how much they are prepared to pay towards emergency services next year, so that their views can be taken into consideration in the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's proposals on the level of council tax precepts.

Over the last few years, both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service have benefited from significant investments that have brought stability and strengthened the way both services look after the public. Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are on firm foundations but will face a challenge to sustain these improvements, next year and into the future.

# Methodology

The public were invited to tell the PFCC their views via a survey. A survey was launched to ask whether they would pay more for the services provided by policing and the fire service – responses were considered by the PFCC in deciding the level of council tax precept to ask residents to pay towards police and fire services in Northamptonshire next year.

The survey also included questions around participants' confidence in the police and how good a job they think both services are doing. Further questions were asked about local policing services to help the PFCC and Northamptonshire Police understand what drives confidence. These results are not included in this report but will inform the next Police, Fire and Crime Plan and the work Northamptonshire Police will undertake to improve public confidence in the service.

An online survey was conducted from December 2023 - January 2024. 1997 people engaged with the survey, giving a representative sample of the county at a 99% confidence level and 3% margin of error.

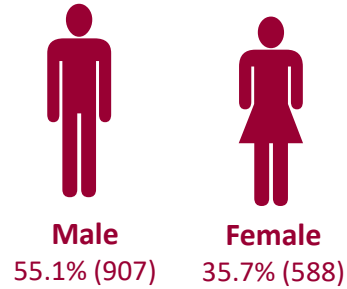
# Survey Sample- Demographic Breakdown

**1,997 people participated in the Council Tax Consultation.**  
(1,734 participated last year)

1,765 completed the final question, giving a dropout rate of 11.6%.

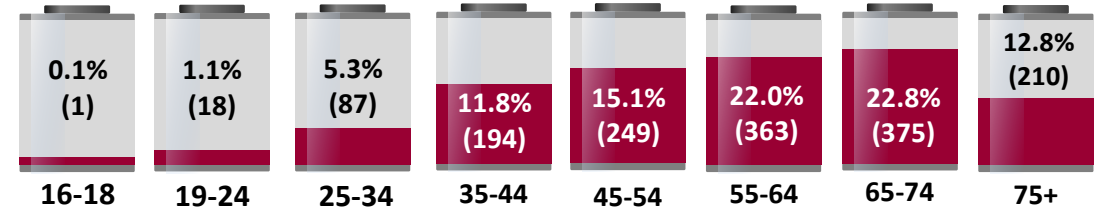
A demographic breakdown of the people who participated in the survey is provided on this page.

## Gender (n=1,647)

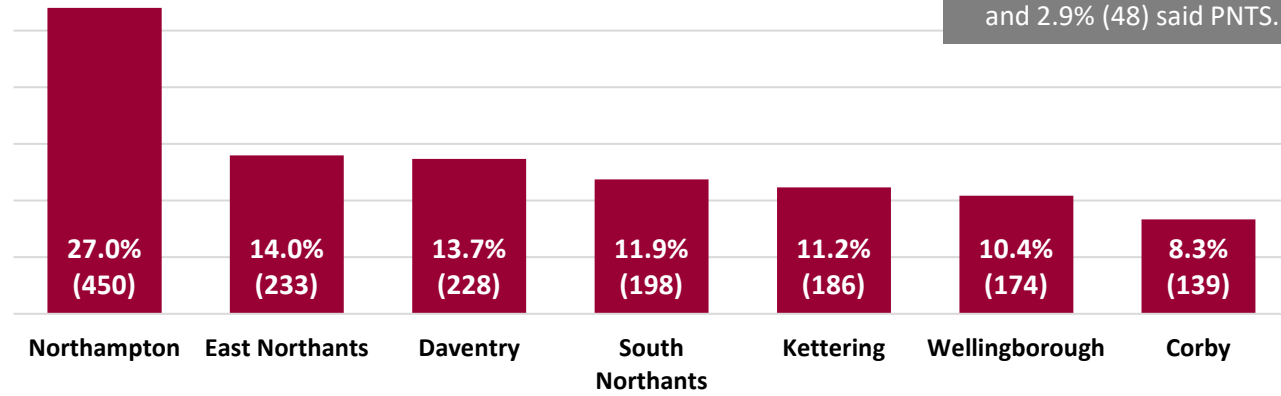


8.5% (140) said prefer not to say (PNTS), 0.4% (7) said trans female, 0.2% (4) said non-binary and 1 said they self-identify.

## Age (n=1,647) 9.1% (150) said PNTS.



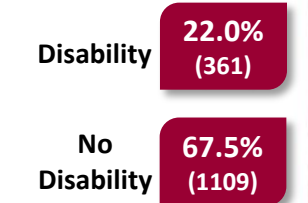
## Location of Participants (n=1,666) 0.6% (10) said they do not live in Northamptonshire and 2.9% (48) said PNTS.



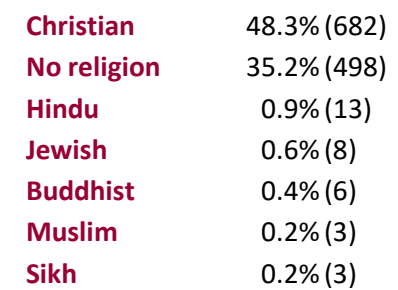
## Ethnicity (n=1,430) 6.2% (89) said PNTS, 0.4% (6) said other ethnicity.



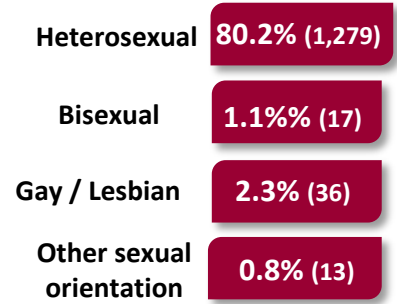
## Disability (n=1,642) 10.5% (172) said PNTS.



## Religion (n=1,413) 10.8% (152) said PNTS and 3.4% (48) said another religion.



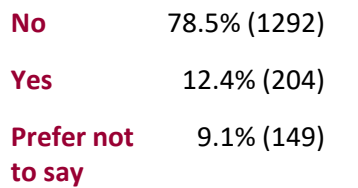
## Sexuality (n=1,595) 15.7% (250) said PNTS.



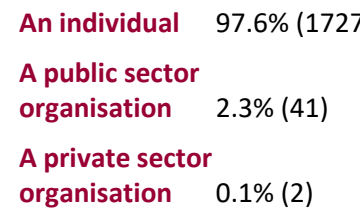
## Do you work for Northamptonshire Police, PFCC or Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service? (n=1,647)



## During the last 12 months have you been a victim of crime? (n=1,645)



## Are you completing this survey as (n=1,770)



# Survey Sample- Representativeness

The 2021 Census data shows the population of Northamptonshire is 785,200. This survey achieved a sample size of 1765 (completing the final question) which gives a representative sample of the whole population at a 95% Confidence Level and 3% Margin of Error.

Unitary Authority	Census 2021 data	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
North Northamptonshire	45.8%	<b>43.9%</b>	-1.9%	Fairly representative
West Northamptonshire	54.2%	<b>52.6%</b>	-1.6%	Fairly representative

Gender	Census 2021 data	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
Male	49.4%	<b>55.1%</b>	+5.7%	Slightly over-represented
Female	50.6%	<b>35.7%</b>	-14.9%	Under-represented

8.5% said prefer not to say. The gender split is slightly more representative than last year.

Ethnicity	Census 2021 data	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
White British	77.5%	<b>83.9%</b>	+6.4%	Slightly over-represented
White Other	10.4%	<b>4.2%</b>	-6.2%	Slightly under-represented
Mixed Ethnicity	2.6%	<b>1.5%</b>	-1.1%	Fairly representative
Black Background	4.0%	<b>1.0%</b>	-3.0%	Slightly under-represented
Asian Background	4.5%	<b>1.7%</b>	-2.8%	Slightly under-represented
Other Ethnicity	1.0%	<b>0.4%</b>	-0.6%	Fairly representative

6.2% of the survey sample said prefer not to say- had these people felt confident to share their demographics, the representativeness may have changed. However, this has improved from last year when 10.3% said prefer not to say.

Age	*Census 2021 data	Survey Sample	% Difference	Representativeness
16-24	12.0%	<b>1.2%</b>	-10.8%	Under-represented
25-34	16.5%	<b>5.3%</b>	-11.2%	Under-represented
35-44	16.7%	<b>11.8%</b>	-4.9%	Slightly under-represented
45-54	17.4%	<b>15.1%</b>	-2.3%	Slightly under-represented
55-64	15.5%	<b>22.0%</b>	+6.5%	Slightly over-represented
65-74	12.2%	<b>22.8%</b>	+10.6%	Over-represented
75+	9.7%	<b>12.8%</b>	+3.1%	Slightly over-represented

\*these are the percentages of the age groups that make up the population once all people under 16 have been removed, as we did not survey under 16s.

9.1% of the survey sample said prefer not to say- had these people felt confident to share their demographics, the representativeness may have changed.

# Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service: Precept Question

The following background information was outlined for survey participants prior to them answering the precept question:

Since moving to the governance of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold, in 2019, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has worked hard to reach a stable financial position.

The fire service budget is almost £8 million more than when it transferred to the OPFCC. More than £10 million of capital investment has been made in new fire tenders and equipment, renewing out-of-date technology and systems, and updating the estate.

The number of Wholetime firefighters has increased from 242 to 254 since 2019, and regular recruitment is taking place so that the number is kept at that level.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has a budget of £29.6m, 64% of which comes from local council taxpayers. 22% of the funding comes from business rates and 14% from central government.

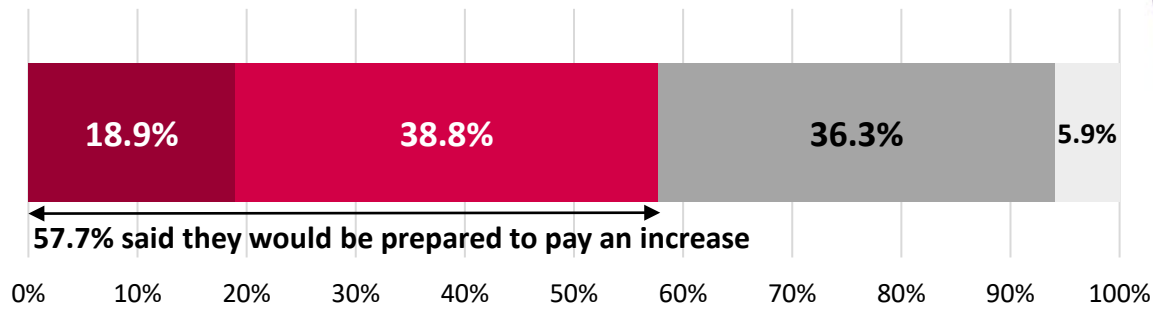
Thanks to good planning and financial management, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is now in a stable position and performance has improved: however, the Service is still the third-lowest funded in the country.

To keep this level of service and continue to make improvements, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service is likely to need around £2.5m more next year than it does for this year's budget. It is expected that £0.5m of this increase will come from government grants and business rates.

For the past two years, the Government has given Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner the flexibility to raise the fire precept by £5. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner is asking for the same flexibility again this year. An increase of £5 per year for a Band D property would be equivalent to 6.8%, around 10p a week and across all properties as follows:

Property Band	Increase per year	Increase per week
A	£3.33	6p
B	£3.89	7p
C	£4.44	9p
D	£5.00	10p
E	£6.11	12p
F	£7.23	14p
G	£8.33	16p
H	£10.00	19p

Considering this, which one of the following statements best represents your views? (n=1,870)



- I don't think the Fire & Rescue services are funded enough in Northamptonshire and I would be prepared to pay more that £5 towards them if it were possible.
- I would be prepared to pay an increase of £5 a year for Fire & Rescue services (approximately 10p per week).
- I would not be prepared to pay any more for Fire and Rescue Services than I do now.
- I don't know

**57.7% of participants said they would be willing to pay the increase of £5, or more than that. 36.3% said they would not be willing to pay any more for policing than they do now. 5.9% said they did not know.**

Last year, 64.8% said they would be willing to pay the £5 increase or more.

9% of the participants were made up of individuals who work for either the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police or Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (see page 4 for a full breakdown of survey participants), therefore, these participants were removed from the analysis to ensure that they did not skew results. Even when considering only people who said they did not work for the organisations, more people said they would be willing to pay more (60.9%) than would not be willing to pay more (32.9%).



# Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service: Precept Question

Can you tell us why you have given your answer? (n=935)

Those who said: "I don't think the Fire & Rescue services are funded enough in Northamptonshire and I would be prepared to pay more than £5 towards them if it were possible." Top Three Themes:

**NFRS is an essential service, so I am prepared to pay for a good service:**

“All Fire and Rescue Services in the UK need our support. It is an essential and valued public service. Nothing to be gained by underfunding it.”

**Because they are under-funded:**

“The Fire Service in Northamptonshire is underfunded and there is a need to grow and diversify the organisation to meet the needs of ever-changing risk; this cannot be achieved without additional funding.”

**Because they do a lot / they do a good job:**

“The fire service don't just tackle fires, they are there to save lives in traffic accidents and provide evacuation assistance where needed and all manner of other support services. If that costs me a little more each year, I think it's easily a price worth paying, provided they can demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness.”

Those who said: "I would be prepared to pay an increase of £5 a year for Fire & Rescue services." Top Three Themes:

**Because we need to invest in NFRS for a high-quality service:**

“Public services need investment to ensure best quality.”

**Because they are an essential service to have there in case we need them:**

“The fire service are like an insurance policy we must keep them so they can help us in different emergencies.”

**Because they do a good job / do their best:**

“Because these people put their lives on the line.”

# Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service: Precept Question

Can you tell us why you have given your answer? (n=935)

Those who said: **"I would not be prepared to pay any more for Fire and Rescue Services than I do now."** Top Three themes:

**NFRS should manage the money better – make efficiencies and don't waste it:**

“Too many inefficiencies look inside the organisation and stop the waste.”

**Because the current climate means household budgets are tight:**

“Enough is enough out of our pockets, how can we pay more these times when everything is going up except our incomes.”

**Negative comments about leadership:**

“Again, this question is loaded. Money isn't the answer. Efficient management is needed.”

Those who said: **"I don't know."** Top Three Themes:

**Due to a lack of transparency / information with how current funds are spent:**

“cannot make a judgement, no details on what you spend your large budget on.”

**Due to leadership:**

“I do believe the Fire & Rescue Services need the funding and with another Commissioner etc, I would be very happy, but until [the current Commissioner] departs, I am so reluctant to accept anything he says.”

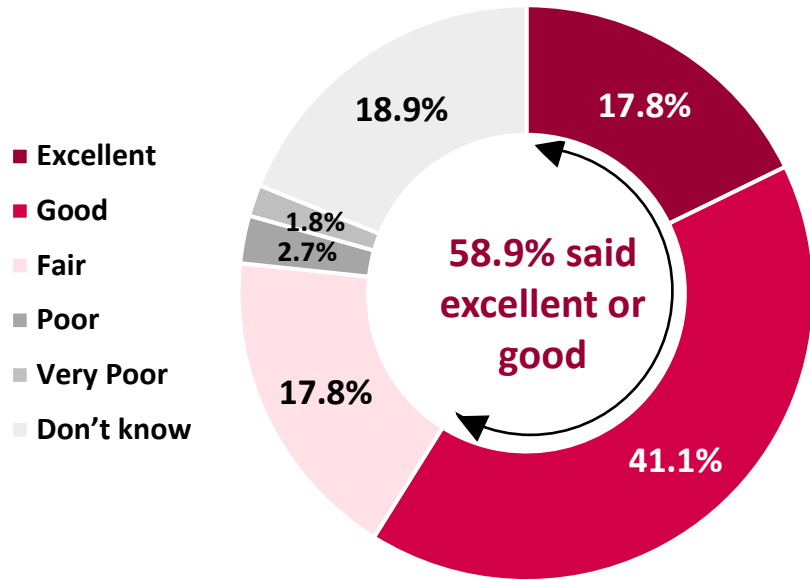
**Because I have never needed to use NFRS:**

“I have no experience with the Fire and Rescue services.”



# Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service: Public Opinion

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are doing? (n=1,863)



**58.9% of participants said that they think NFRS do a good or excellent job.** Last year, 65.3% said this.

9% of the participants were made up of individuals who work for either the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police or NFRS (see page... for a full breakdown of survey participants). 62.1% of those who work in the organisations said excellent / good. 60.0% of those who do not work for the organisations said excellent/good. 50.3% of those who said prefer not to say said excellent/good.

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about NFRS? (n=521)

The most common themes of those who said good/excellent were...

**Because they give a good and important service**

“One of the few public services in which we can still have absolute faith.”

**Negative commissioner / leadership comments**

“Dedicated group of people that are being poorly led.”

**More resources / staff are needed**

“With additional funding hopefully they will be able to provide an excellent service which is what they should be striving for.”

**Hope I never need it, but heard positive**

“Fortunately, I haven't had need of the services of the Fire department personally for a long time, but all reports I've heard have been positive.”

The most common themes of those who said fair were...

...similar to the comments made by those who said good/excellent. The main themes included **negative comments about leadership** and comments about **the need for them to receive more resources**. There were also comments that people **hadn't needed them so were not sure**, about the **lack of transparency/visibility with what they do**, and about a **need to use non-deployed time better e.g. to support to other emergency services**:

“No experience so difficult to assess.”

“Good at emergency response. Need to see more use of their non deployed time.”

The most common themes of those who said poor/very poor were...

**Leadership**

“Fire chief situation has been a shambles. A good organisation starts with good leadership and NFRS haven't had this.”

**Negative Culture**

“The culture needs massively improving if they want to make it an inclusive and welcoming place to work.”

**They need to do more when not responding/ support other emergency services**

“They should do more, similar to USA fire service, they should assist Ambulance when they are unavailable.”

# Northamptonshire Police: Precept Question

The following background information was outlined for survey participants prior to them answering the precept question:

Northamptonshire Police has an annual budget of £168.6 million – around 45 per cent of this comes from the precept you pay through your council tax, with the rest coming from central government grants.

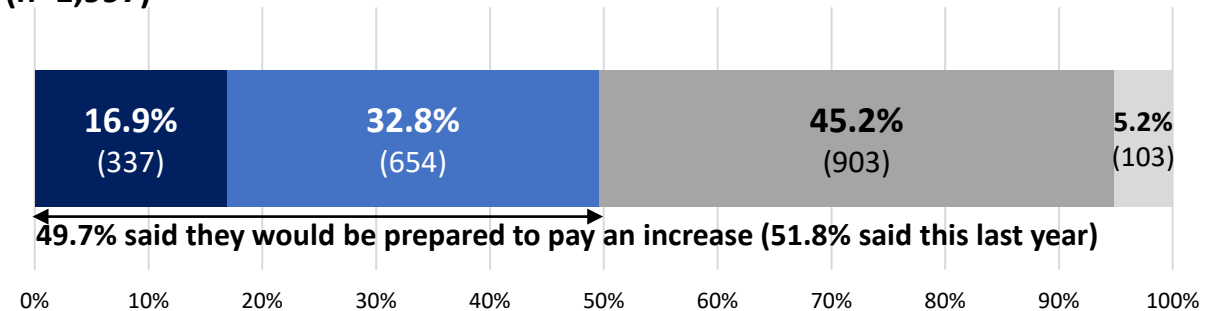
The Force now has 1,500 police officers, which is more than it has ever had. The number of police officers dedicated to neighbourhood policing has increased, with plans to enhance this even further; the response to local crimes such as burglary has been improved; a new roads policing team has been set up; and vital systems and technology have been updated.

To keep this level of service and continue to make improvements, Northamptonshire Police is likely to need around £12.4m more next year than it does for this year's budget. It is expected that around £5.7m of this increase will come from government grants.

Policing has asked the Government for an increase in police precept of up to £15 in the next financial year. That would increase the rate for a Band D property to £308.04, an increase of 5.1% or an extra 29p per week for an average Band D property and across all properties as follows:

Property Band	Increase per year	Increase per week
A	£10.00	19p
B	£11.67	22p
C	£13.33	26p
D	£15.00	29p
E	£18.33	35p
F	£21.67	42p
G	£25.00	48p
H	£30.00	58p

Considering this, which of the following statements best represents your views?  
(n=1,997)



- I don't think the Police are funded enough in Northamptonshire, and I would be prepared to pay more than £15 towards them if that were possible.
- I would be prepared to pay an increase of £15 a year for policing (approximately 29p per week per week for an average, Band D household).
- I would not be prepared to pay any more for policing than I do now.
- I don't know

**49.7% of participants said they would be willing to pay the increase of £15, or more than that. 45.2% said they would not be willing to pay any more for policing than they do now. 5.2% said they did not know.**

Last year, 51.8% said they would be willing to pay the £15 increase or more.

9% of the participants were made up of individuals who work for either the OPFCC, Northamptonshire Police or Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (see page 4 for a full breakdown of survey participants), therefore, these participants were removed from the analysis to ensure that they did not skew results. Even when considering only people who said they did not work for the organisations, more people said they would be willing to pay more (50.1%) than would not be willing to pay more (45.1%).

# Northamptonshire Police: Precept Question

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about funding for Northamptonshire police? (n=882)

Those who said: **“I don’t think the Police are funded enough in Northamptonshire and I would be prepared to pay more than £15 towards them if it were possible.”** Three Top Themes:

**I would be prepared to pay more for policing to increase their resource and visibility:**

“ People can't expect to have more police on the streets etc without the funding to pay for it, and they are a much-needed service.”

**Positive comments about Northamptonshire Police and the job they do:**

“ I have found Police very helpful when I have called them. I would be happy to pay more to keep the same level of support or improve the service.”

**Because I want to see improvements made:**

“ No problem paying more but want to see the police on the streets and in my neighbourhood challenging all forms of anti-social behaviour.”

Those who said: **“I would be prepared to pay an increase of £15 a year for Policing.”** Three Top Themes:

**The police need an increased visibility:**

“ Would pay IF it was to put more police on the streets.”

**A need to spend money wisely and not waste:**

“ Cost pressures are understood but increases in precept should never take away the need to increase efficiencies.”

**Policing should be funded centrally from government:**

“ More funding should be provided from central government, via general taxation.”

# Northamptonshire Police: Precept Question

Have you got any further comments you would like to make about funding for Northamptonshire police? (n=882)

Those who said: **"I would not be prepared to pay any more for Policing than I do now."** Top Three Themes:

**Because I am unhappy with the service / not good value for money:**

“Unfortunately, confidence has been lost and throwing good money after bad just doesn't appeal anymore a reform needs to happen. Just blindly putting money into a failing service will not help.”

**Because of a lack of visibility from Northamptonshire Police:**

“I don't see any visible police in my area lack of police in many areas' crime on the increase.”

**Because they should manage their current budget better / stop wasting money:**

“I think along with everyone else at the moment the Police have to be a lot more careful on spending.”

Those who said: **"I don't know."** Top Three Themes:

**Because they should manage their current budget better/stop wasting money:**

“Money is wasted - building they brought and then couldn't use - Chief suspended on full pay...”

**Because of a lack of visibility from Northamptonshire Police:**

“I live in a rural area and feel we are unpoliced, you only see cars driving through. Public contact is needed, park the car, get out, walk and speak to the people. You may be surprised by what you are told.”

**Due to cost of living / can't afford it**

“I agree policing needs adequate funding, but financially we're struggling to stay afloat as it is.”

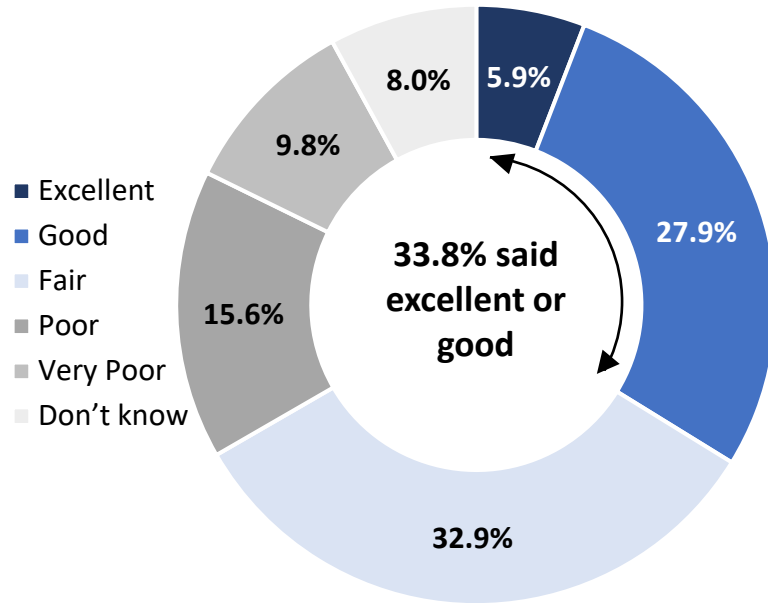
# Northamptonshire Police: Public Opinion/Confidence

In your opinion, how good of a job do you think Northamptonshire Police are doing? (n=1,944)

Why do you say that? (n=1,285)

The most common themes to impact people's judgements were...

The most common themes of those who said good/excellent were...



33.8% of participants said they think Northamptonshire Police are doing a good or excellent job. Last year, 39.4% of participants said this.

The most common reason for participants giving a good/excellent rating was due to **good personal experiences** that they had with the police. Participants who selected good/excellent also gave reasons for their due to the perception that **the police are doing the best job they can, due to the communications they see** (e.g. statistics, media/social media and neighbourhood alert), some said that **the police need more resource**. A large number of participants gave their good rating because they felt **police visibility was good** (or improved), but some also had **negative comments about visibility** and said that it could be improved in some areas such as rural places for example. Other, less frequently mentioned comments included not having needed them, the need to make improvements and negative comments around leadership.

“I can see a presence on the streets now, which is calming.”

“The few times my husband and I have had to call police, we have had excellent service and support. Police do get a bad name but in my opinion, they do an amazing job.”

“under so much pressure, most do their best of what they can with what they have. need more officers.”

“See some good results on social media.”

The most common themes of those who said fair were...

The most frequently mentioned reasons for giving a rating of 'fair' included the perception that **visibility was poor**, a perception that the **police need to tackle crime better/improve service**, comments about being **under-resourced** and comments about the police **focusing on the 'wrong' crimes** in their opinion. There were also comments about **leadership** as a reason for giving the rating. Other, less frequently mentioned comments included: the belief the police do their best, rating given due to personal experience (or lack of personal experience), comments around drugs/ASB/gangs, a need for better communications.

“They would do better if they had more funding and enough resources. This is not their fault.”

“crimes happen everywhere and I don't see much follow up.”

“Too heavy concentration on items that don't matter to the individual public rather than concentrating on burglaries etc.”

“We do not see any Police around.”

The most common themes of those who said poor/very poor were...

The most frequently mentioned reasons for giving a poor/very poor rating was due to the perception that **the police need to do a better job dealing with crime**, due to a **lack of visibility**, a **lack of response/poor performance**, and **bad personal experiences**. There were also negative comments about **leadership** and comments about a **lack of resource**.

“Too many crimes and not enough convictions. Too long a wait time to act on crime.”

“Lack of response to emergencies and poor judgment from Police and Fire Commissioner.”

“No visible presence at all where I live. Drug dealers however are clearly visible almost every day.”

“On the occasions that I have had to deal with them being a victim of crime, I was not impressed.”