

# London's Voice: In Focus

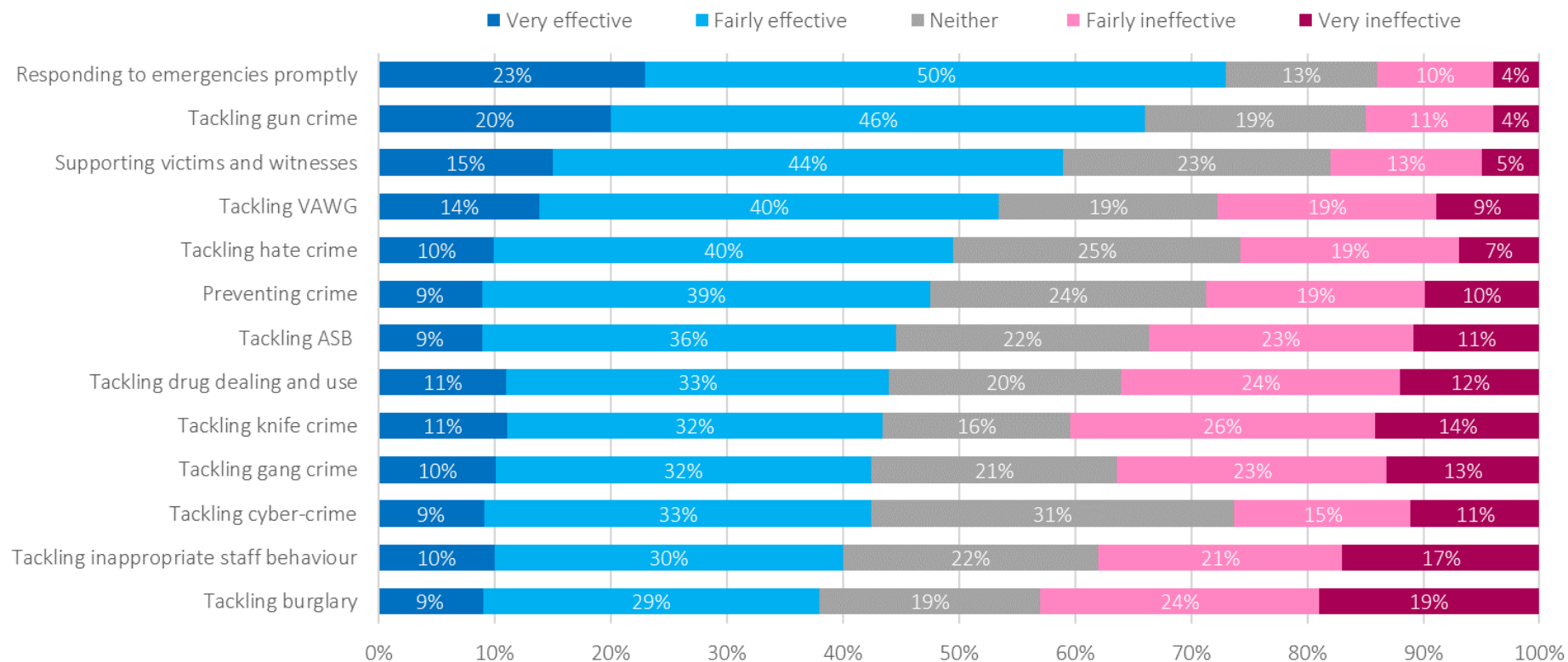
MOPAC Public Attitude Survey  
Quarter 2 2022-23

What makes an effective police service?  
Understanding Londoners' views on 'police effectiveness'.

# Londoners' views of police effectiveness vary across different elements of police work – with lowest confidence in the police's ability to tackle burglary...

Londoners are *most confident* that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) **responds to emergencies promptly** (73%); while the majority also believe they are effective at **tackling gun crime** (66%) and **supporting victims and witnesses** (59%).

However, Londoners are more divided across several aspects – including the way police deal with antisocial behaviour (ASB), drugs, gang crime and knife crime. Only 40% believe the Metropolitan Police Service **tackles inappropriate behaviour amongst its own officers and staff**, while Londoners are *least confident* in the MPS' ability to **effectively tackle burglary** (38%).



A quarter of Londoners said they 'don't know' how effectively the MPS tackles cyber-crime (above levels seen for other questions) highlighting particular uncertainty about MPS work here.

# Certain groups of Londoners are less likely to feel the police are effective – but these gaps are also wider for some activities than for others.

Certain groups of Londoners are *less likely* to believe the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is effective across a range of policing activities. In particular, Londoners who identify as **LGBT+** are far less likely to respond positively for many measures; including believing the police tackle violence against women and girls (-19pp.), support victims and witnesses (-15pp.) and tackle hate crime (-14pp.). Similarly, Londoners from a **Mixed Ethnic Background** are also less likely to respond positive across many of the policing activities.

However, the magnitude of these gaps also varies *within these groups for different activities*: while some gaps are wide, some are far narrower. To illustrate – despite being more negative across many other actions – LGBT+ and Mixed Ethnicity Londoners are in fact slightly **MORE** likely to feel the police tackle burglary effectively. Similarly, Londoners from a Mixed Ethnic Background are also *no less likely* to believe the police tackle ASB or drug dealing/use. Importantly, this suggests that poor perceptions amongst these groups may to some extent be more specific to **certain elements** of police effectiveness than others.

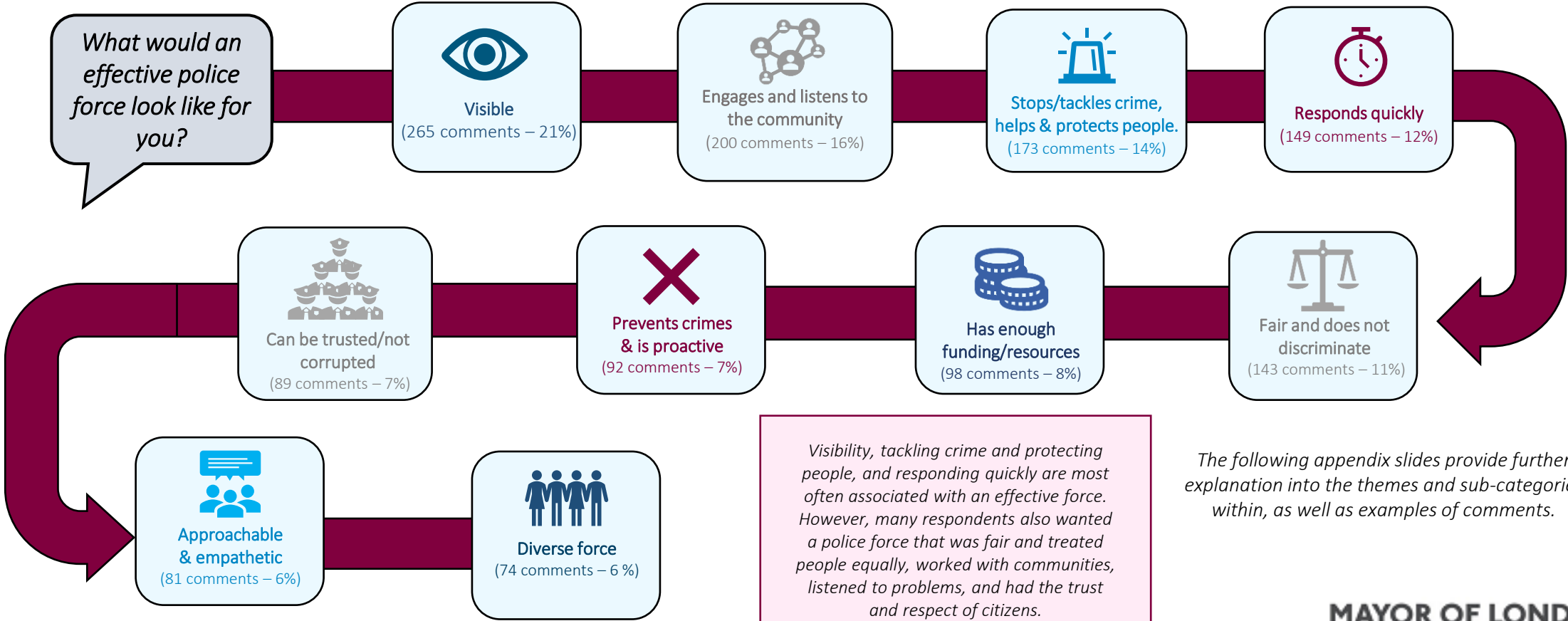
In turn, Londoners that have a **disability** and those **aged 65+** are *more likely* to believe the Metropolitan Police Service is effective across many activities. Large positive gaps are also seen for feeling police effectively tackle burglary amongst Black Londoners and those aged 16 to 24.

	Gender		Age				LGBT+		Disability		Ethnicity					
	Male	Female	15-24	25-34	35-64	65+	LGBT+	Not LGBT+	Yes	No	White British	White Other	Mixed	Asian	Black	Other
Tackle hate crime	0%	-1%	-1%	-5%	0%	5%	-14%	0%	1%	-1%	-3%	3%	-10%	4%	-4%	4%
Respond to emergencies	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	-1%	-5%	1%	-1%	0%	0%	3%	-5%	2%	-3%	-2%
Tackle gun crime	3%	-3%	1%	-2%	-1%	7%	-9%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	-9%	0%	-4%	3%
Support victims and witnesses	1%	0%	1%	-4%	0%	6%	-15%	1%	1%	0%	-1%	4%	-10%	4%	-3%	2%
Tackle drug dealing/use	0%	-1%	5%	-2%	-3%	8%	-5%	0%	5%	-1%	-3%	3%	-2%	2%	5%	-3%
Tackle VAWG	3%	-2%	0%	-3%	0%	6%	-19%	2%	5%	0%	-3%	3%	-8%	7%	1%	3%
Tackle knife crime	0%	0%	2%	-4%	-2%	9%	-4%	0%	9%	-1%	-2%	3%	-7%	1%	4%	-7%
Tackle gang crime	1%	-2%	2%	-3%	-2%	8%	-9%	0%	6%	-1%	-3%	3%	-7%	2%	3%	2%
Tackle burglary	-2%	1%	14%	1%	-4%	-1%	3%	0%	4%	-1%	-6%	4%	5%	1%	10%	5%
Tackle ASB	0%	0%	3%	-1%	-1%	4%	-8%	1%	6%	0%	-3%	4%	-2%	1%	6%	-1%
Tackle cybercrime	-1%	1%	1%	-3%	0%	3%	-6%	0%	2%	0%	-4%	4%	-5%	3%	1%	5%
Prevent crime	1%	-2%	1%	-1%	-2%	4%	-7%	0%	1%	0%	-3%	2%	-10%	4%	2%	-1%
Tackle inappropriate staff behaviour	1%	-1%	2%	-1%	-1%	2%	-8%	0%	2%	0%	-5%	6%	-6%	7%	-3%	4%

Percentage point gaps between results for demographic groups and the overall MPS result. Differences of 5-9pp. are shaded pale, and 10+pp. are shaded dark.

# Results from qualitative comments also suggest an effective police service is one that spans a range of different activities – often beyond ‘crime-fighting’

In April 2022, Londoners were also asked to explain what an effective police service looked like for them. 1251 respondents gave comments, with the top themes outlined below. Once again, this builds a **complex picture of effectiveness that spans a range of different activities**. It is worth noting that – although many Londoners mentioned crime-fighting activities (such as visible patrolling, protecting people and tackling crime, and responding to emergencies) - comments also often extended to cover elements of communication, engagement with communities, and treatment. Again, this supports a broad view of police effectiveness that underlies both trust and confidence in police.



*The following appendix slides provide further explanation into the themes and sub-categories within, as well as examples of comments.*

# Appendix: Londoners think an effective force is a one they see and that engages with communities

During April 2022, 1251 respondents to the Public Attitude Survey were asked on a free text question about their concept of an effective police force. Thematic analysis was used to understand perceptions and associations.



## Visible (265 comments – 21%)

Police visibility is the most commonly mentioned theme, suggesting for many this is key to effectiveness. Seeing police makes people feel safe and that they are there for them. 44 respondents specifically mention being able to contact police, or police being available and reachable when they are needed.

*“An effective police force is one who can be more visible and show their presence on street to deter crimes”*

*“I think there should be more police officers on the street so that you can speak to them. I struggle with things everyday.”*

*“Ability to listen to what's happening on the street, being pro active and present on streets.”*

*“One that is present and reaches out to people, and is not web based, so has a personal presence and are engaged in the community.”*

*“One that would reverse the closure of all local police stations. More of a presence on the streets - walking around the neighbourhood would be a very positive thing. More prevention rather than reacting to crimes.”*

*“One who shows presence and listens and acts on crime.”*

*“Police should be more visible on the streets.”*

*“One that you can see patrolling on foot.”*



## Engages and listens to the community (200 comments – 16%)

Many respondents mention the need for police to be effective in engaging with the community, playing an active role in it, interacting with its members, and having community needs in mind when doing their job. This includes by listening to and engaging with individuals, but also being aware of wider societal issues.

*“One that works with the community, not just going by their own opinion. Listening to what other experts in the field say, dealing with things at the root cause. Social welfare programs are needed.”*

*“Responds to community needs. Supports at need groups and vulnerable people. Tackles social issues at source.”*

*“An important part of the community that keeps the balance and maintains peace. The need to be part of the community, and to be trusted and respected.”*

*“People who know the community and are able to respond to situations with integrity and compassion.”*

*“Communicating with local community. reflecting community with diversity”*

*“One that works for the community and not just for the sake of a job.”*

*“Police should have good relations with the community.”*

# Appendix: For some, an effective force is one that tackles crime and acts quickly



## Stops/tackles crime, helps & protects people. (173 comments – 14%)

Comments often refer to a notion of serving and protecting. Half (87) mention a need to protect citizens and make them feel safe, around 35% (69) talk about tackling crime and stopping criminals and around 2 in 10 mention helping people in a more general sense. Specific mentions to preventing crime *before it happens* have been grouped separately.

*"If you see the crime rate is going down and there is less crime and violence, if people need help they can call the police."*

*"Tackling crimes, including violence, hate crime, sexual harassment."*

*"One that reduces crime so that people are not frightened to go out and live their lives."*

*"Dealing with the crime and being there when you need them, solving the problems that are there"*

*"I suppose those who make the population feel safe, I like to think they would protect me."*

*"Transparent, honest, not corrupt. Serves to protect and prevent crime rather than punish. Support, not villainise poorer communities. Keep young people safe."*

*"Care about crime and care about safety of the area and give insurance that residents are safe"*

*"If you feel safe to walk around at midnight and 5 that makes it good police force."*

*"They can provide security and tackle crime."*



## Responds quickly (149 comments – 12%)

Respondents believe a timely response is crucial in an effective police force, with over one in ten mentioning this theme. Londoners want police officers to arrive quickly when called and to get back to people regarding their concerns in a timely manner.

*"When you call for an emergency they turn up quickly, not hours later."*

*"Responds and acts instantly to make the country safer. Supports individuals and makes them feel safe."*

*"An effective police force responds promptly to the major concerns of the population it serves."*

*"Police should promptly respond to crises and support victims."*

*"Responding in a timely manner to all calls from the public, not days later."*

*"Police should respond to the public quickly before it's too late."*

*"When you report something, they get back to you in an hour."*

*"They should be available fast when people need them."*

# Appendix: Police need to treat people fairly and have enough resources



Fair and does not discriminate  
(143 comments – 11%)

Over 10% of respondents believe that an effective police force needs to be fair and treat everyone equally. Some comments specifically mention discrimination based on race or gender (including stop and search) while others make more general references to being fair.

“One that treats all the same.”

“Police should treat everyone the same.”

“They should listen to members of the public when they report a crime, understand, and act on it without bias of racism, misogyny etc.”

“A force that protects all, not just some people. Not discriminate against people because of their race or religion.”

“Police should be fair and shouldn't discriminate.”

“A force that is reflective of the community, is fair and non judgmental.”

“Police [...]should be trained to look after everyone - regardless of any race, gender and sexuality - and should be aware of unconscious bias.”

“An effective Police Force is has to be fair and equal to everyone. Police access should be the same for all people, irrespective of race and class.”

“Treats citizens equally and respects them.”



Has enough funding and resources  
(98 comments – 8%)

Almost 100 respondents mentioned resources when thinking about an effective police force. Some people specifically mention monetary funding whereas some respondents mention the need for a higher number of police officers.

“One that has the resources to tackle even minor incidents and being visible.”

“Need a lot more police officers for performance to improve.”

“To have more police on the force that aren't scared to go out into areas and confront people around here. The police have no backbone. [...]The police cuts have negatively impacted our police force and it needs to be built back up again otherwise nothing will change.”

“More funding to met police will help to function better”

“One that does everything they should, but they are understaffed. Have plenty of staff to cover all the bases, do their duty in a more efficient way.”

“More officers because they are currently under staffed.”

“Sufficient resources given to them to do their job better.”

“One that has more money.”

“One that's supported financially by the government. Too many cuts.”

# Appendix: An effective force is one that is proactive and has integrity



**Prevents crime & is proactive**  
(92 comments – 7%)

92 respondents emphasized the preventive role of the police, the ability to prevent things before they happen and also refer to a proactive attitude as opposed to being reactive and only acting on issues as they arise.

*“Tackling low level crime to prevent people escalating to higher level crimes.”*

*“My sister got attacked in the night. If they can prevent these crimes, that will be a good police force.”*

*“They need to approach youngsters on the road, find out what they are doing and search them, cause they are the ones carrying knives. They need to find out why they are running around on the streets, would be a preventative measure against crime.”*

*“A police force that protects it's community, while also educating and planning/preparing for future potential threats.”*

*“Prevention of crime, so being proactive and working with the community.”*

*“An effective police force is responsive and solves problems, and is proactive in preventing crime”*

*“One that does more crime prevention.”*

*“More prevention rather than reacting to crimes.”*



**Can be trusted/not corrupted**  
(87 comments – 6%)

These comments mention the need for the police to be trusted by society, being also linked with an honest force and a force that cannot be corrupted. Some respondents believe police should work to earn people's respect, and that communities should see them as a reassuring and protective presence.

*“It's basically about community policing so people don't see the police as an enemy, but as a protective service they can trust.”*

*“One that has the trust of all the public to carry out their duties and people have faith in them to be fair.”*

*“People you can rely on and that treat you with respect.”*

*“Someone you can trust, rely on to act properly and support you as a victim.”*

*“Trustworthy.”*

*“One that can be trusted”*

*“They should show integrity and good principles, and highlight problems rather than hiding them.”*

*“Transparent, honest, not corrupt.”*

*“Build up the trust with public”*

*“One that people can go to for help, the community trusts, that doesn't always jump in and arrest people..”*



# Appendix: An effective force should also be approachable and diverse



## Approachable & empathetic (81 comments – 6%)

This theme groups comments that refer to the human factor of the police force and their ability to show empathy and approachability so that citizens feel comfortable when interacting with them and they don't think twice about contacting or reaching out to them.

*"An approachable and cooperative body of people."*

*"Someone that makes you feel comfortable in their approach. Have a non-judgemental, warmer nature. I find them intimidating."*

*"Police should be less aggressive. Treat people like human beings, not like animals."*

*"I think if they are approachable, especially to women who do not always feel comfortable approaching them."*

*"Visible local officers who are approachable and understand the neighbourhood."*

*"Don't scare young people, and build a relationship with the youth."*

*"One that makes people comfortable."*



## Diverse force (74 comments – 6%)

74 respondents specifically mention the need for more diversity in the police force – including by gender and ethnicity. This includes comments about being reflective of the community in which they police.

*"One that reflects the demographics of the area that the people live"*

*"One that is diverse at senior ranks."*

*"Ideally should be multicultural"*

*"They should be more diverse in race and gender within the force."*

*"People that reflect the community they work in."*

*"They need a complete shake up and proportionate representation of women and ethnic minorities in the workforce."*

*"One that is more reflective of the society they police."*

*"More officers with absolute diversity because the attitude of police officers is concerning."*

*"Police should be supportive and represent the community."*