

SPICe Briefing

The Scottish Criminal Justice System: The Police

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This briefing is one of six covering various aspects of the Scottish criminal justice system. It outlines the organisation, administration and funding of the police service in Scotland. It also provides a description of the role and responsibilities of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland, outlines the police complaints system and considers current proposals to reform the police service.

The other five briefings in this series are:

- [The Scottish Criminal Justice System: Legal and Administrative Arrangements](#)
- [The Scottish Criminal Justice System: The Public Prosecution System](#)
- [The Scottish Criminal Justice System: The Criminal Courts](#)
- [The Scottish Criminal Justice System: The Prison Service](#)
- [Children and the Scottish Criminal Justice System](#)



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POLICE FORCES AND PERSONNEL

Scottish Police Forces

Scotland has eight 'territorial' police forces (ie police forces based wholly within Scotland). Forces vary greatly in terms of the number of police officers employed, the percentage of the Scottish population and of the geographic area covered.

Table 1: Police Forces – police officers, percentage of population and geographic area

Police Force	Police Officers at 31 March 2011 ¹	% of Scottish Population ²	Force area as % of Scotland
Strathclyde	8,290	42.7	17.8
Lothian & Borders	2,959	18.1	8.3
Grampian	1,516	10.5	11.2
Tayside	1,236	7.7	9.6
Fife	1,107	7.0	1.7
Central Scotland	871	5.6	3.4
Northern	782	5.6	39.8
Dumfries & Galloway	503	2.9	8.2
Total	17,263	100	100

¹ Figures are for whole-time equivalent posts based on Scottish Government Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics Scotland, 31 March 2011

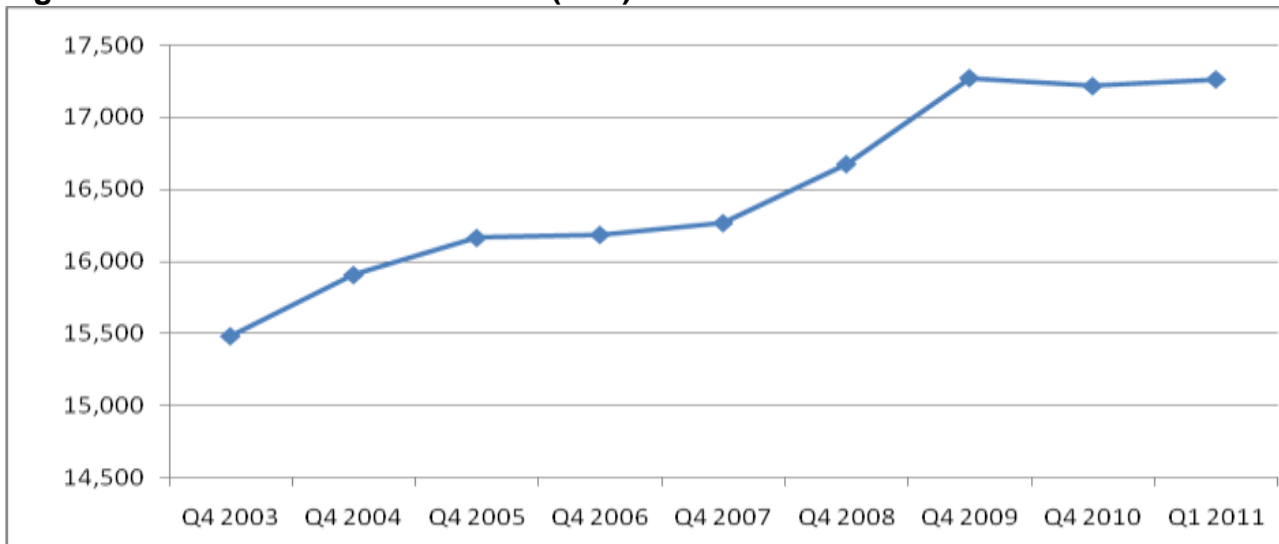
² GRO 30 June 2010. Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Police forces also vary in their internal structures. However, forces generally have structures based on both:

- geographical areas – forces are structured into territorial divisions or command areas, and further divided into sub divisions. In total, there are 27 police divisions across all eight Scottish police forces ranging in size from around 120 to 1,380 police officers
- functions – forces are structured based on a distinction between general operations (eg routine tasks mainly carried out by uniformed officers such as preventing crime, protecting people and property and maintaining public order) and specialist operations (eg criminal investigation, underwater search, air support and firearms response)

As Figure 1 below shows, between 2003 and 2011 police numbers in Scotland increased by almost 2,000 from 15,385 (30 Sept 2003) to 17,263 (31 March 2011). Before the 2007 Scottish Parliament elections, the Scottish National Party made a manifesto pledge to put 1,000 more police officers on the streets of Scotland (SNP 2007). Over the following three years police numbers increased from 16,234 (31 March 2007) to peak at 17,424 (June 2010). Since then police numbers fell back slightly to 17,217 (31 Dec 2010) before rising marginally to 17,263 (31 March 2011).

Figure 1: Number of Police Officers (FTE) in Scotland 2003 to 2011



Source: Scottish Government Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics (2011a). Totals include officers deployed in the eight Scottish police forces (including Additional Regular Police), and those on secondment or central service. Figures are as at the end of the respective quarter - Q4 = 31 December; Q1 = 31 March.

Other Police Forces with Officers in Scotland

While this briefing focuses on the eight Scottish police forces, it is worth noting that a number of other UK police bodies operate in Scotland, including:

- [British Transport Police](#) – police force for the railways providing a service for rail operators, their staff and passengers across Britain
- [Ministry of Defence Police](#) – provides security within Ministry of Defence property across Britain (eg the nuclear submarine base at Faslane)
- [Civil Nuclear Constabulary](#) – provides protection for nuclear materials on designated UK nuclear licensed sites and in transit
- [Serious and Organised Crime Agency](#) – SOCA tackles serious organised crime across the UK including Class A drugs, people smuggling and human trafficking, fraud, computer crime and money laundering. SOCA and its functions are to be absorbed into the new National Crime Agency (Home Office 2011)
- [United Kingdom Border Agency](#) – an agency of the Home office tasked to protect the UK's border

Unlike the eight Scottish police forces, the forces listed above fall under UK rather than Scottish jurisdiction.

Police Force Organisation

For operational purposes, police forces in Scotland are generally divided into at least three branches – uniformed, criminal investigation (CID) and traffic. Additionally, most forces have specialised departments such as under-water units and police dogs and most also have a community relations branch which is concerned with advising the public on personal and domestic security and crime prevention. Typically, police community relations branches also have responsibility for organising projects within the community which may include helping young people understand the role of the police in society and liaising with schools and community groups.

Police Officers

The term 'constable' describes both the office held by a police officer and the lowest rank within the police service. All police officers hold the 'office of constable' and all promoted police officers have, at some point, been constables. Excluding probationary constable and cadet, there are nine ranks in total in the service. These are shown in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Police ranks and insignia



Source: Police-Information.co.uk

Table 2, below, provides statistics for 2008/09 on police officers by rank. The table also includes the number and proportion of female officers in each rank.

Table 2: Total number of police officers, percentage of female police officers and percentage of black and minority ethnic police officers by rank 2008/09

Rank	Total police officers	Female police officers as % of total police officers	Black and ethnic police officers as % of total police officers
Constable	13,364	28.0	1.2
Sergeant	2,453	16.3	0.5
Inspector	963	12.7	0.4
Chief Inspector	277	11.9	0
Superintendent & Chief Superintendent	207	10.1	1.4
ACPOS Ranks	30	13.3	0
All ranks	17,294	25.0	1.1

Source: [HMICS Statistics](#) (Scottish Government 2009a)

The various ranks of police officer are represented by three police staff associations:

- [Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland](#) (ACPOS) – represents chief constables, deputy chief constables, assistant chief constables and senior support staff of the eight Scottish police forces. Its website states that it has evolved into a strategic body which oversees and co-ordinates all aspects of the direction and development of the police service in Scotland
- [Association of Scottish Police Superintendents](#) (ASPS) – represents superintendents and chief superintendents. Its website states that the work of its members involves a mix of policy implementation, policy development, financial management and operational control
- [Scottish Police Federation](#) (SPF) – represents constables, sergeants, inspectors and chief inspectors. Its website states that it has over 16,500 members. Its statutory remit covers the welfare and efficiency of police officers. SPF also negotiates pay, conditions and pensions for the police

The SPF's website also notes that, whilst it performs a role similar to a trade union:

“Police Officers cannot be members of any trade union or of any association having as its object, or one of its objects, to control or influence pay, pensions or conditions of service of any police force. Police Officers are not permitted to take any form of industrial action.”

Civilian Support Staff

Police forces have always employed a large number of civilian support staff. As indicated in Figure 3 below, the use of civilian support staff grew significantly to a peak in 2006/07 of 8,171 (including 269 traffic wardens and 185 cadets). Underlying this growth was a desire to make more efficient and effective use of resources. While cost saving has been a factor in what has been described as the ‘civilianisation of policing’ (eg see Unison Scotland 2009), there are many police functions which can be more effectively delivered by qualified civilian staff than by police officers. These include core organisational and management functions in areas such as administration, infrastructure and business services, human resources, communications and marketing, quality control and regulation, procurement and training. Other areas in which civilian staff provide crucial support to operational policing include information technology and forensics. Roles traditionally filled by uniformed police officers such as custody and detention, report checking, reports to the Procurator Fiscal and investigative management, but which do not require a police officer's power of arrest, have also been increasingly civilianised over the last decade or so.

However, since 2006/07 support staff numbers have begun to decrease across all forces. In 2008/09 a total of 7,130 support staff (including 200 traffic wardens and 70 cadets) were employed by the eight Scottish police forces.¹ This trend seems likely to continue as forces face budget cuts while trying to maintain police numbers. For example, in oral evidence to the Justice Committee, the Chief Constable of Lothian and Borders Police, David Strang, confirmed that if forces were required to maintain police officer numbers at a minimum of 17,234 they would do so. However, he went on to say:²

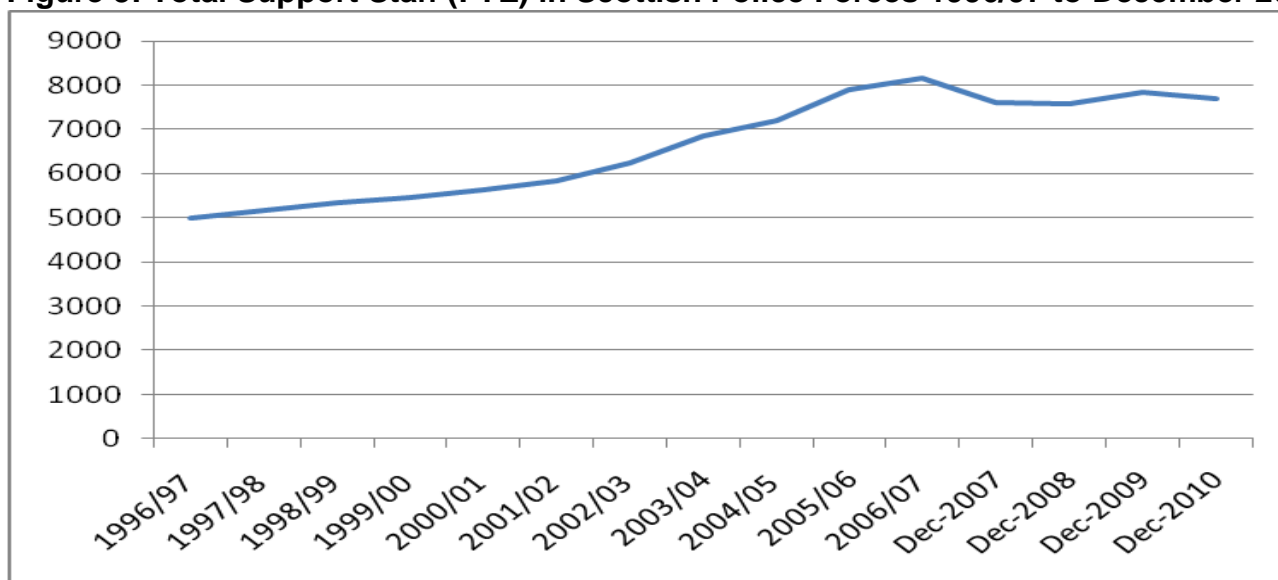
“(…) as a consequence, the 2.6 per cent cash reduction, which is actually a 5 to 6 per cent real-terms reduction, will need to fall elsewhere in police budgets through efficiency

¹ HMICS Statistics - Total number of support staff employed by Scottish police forces, March 2010

² The figure of 17,234 police officers reflects the Scottish Government's aim of maintaining police officer numbers at a minimum of 1,000 more than the March 2007 figure of 16,234.

savings, shared services and reduction in police support staff numbers”. (Scottish Parliament 2011)

Figure 3: Total Support Staff (FTE) in Scottish Police Forces 1996/97 to December 2010



Sources: HMICS Statistics, (figures for 1996/97 to 2006-07). Scottish Government, Parliamentary question [S3W-40233](#). (Figures for Dec 2007 to Dec 2010 – includes SPSA staff)

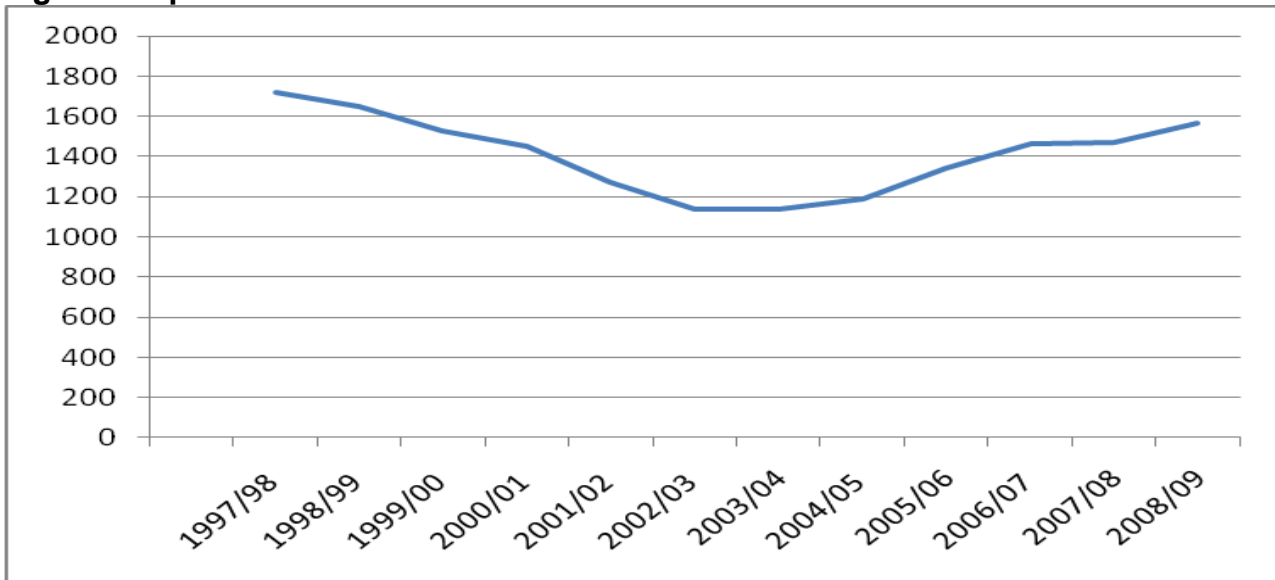
Unlike police officers, civilian support staff can be members of trade unions and take industrial action (eg see the police staff section of the [UNISON Scotland](#) website).

Special Constables

Scottish police forces also make use of part-time volunteer special constables with 1,567 in post in 2008/09. Whilst on duty, special constables have the same powers as regular police officers. The Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 allows the Scottish Ministers to make regulations entitling special constables to receive periodic payments in recognition of a commitment to serve for a set number of hours.

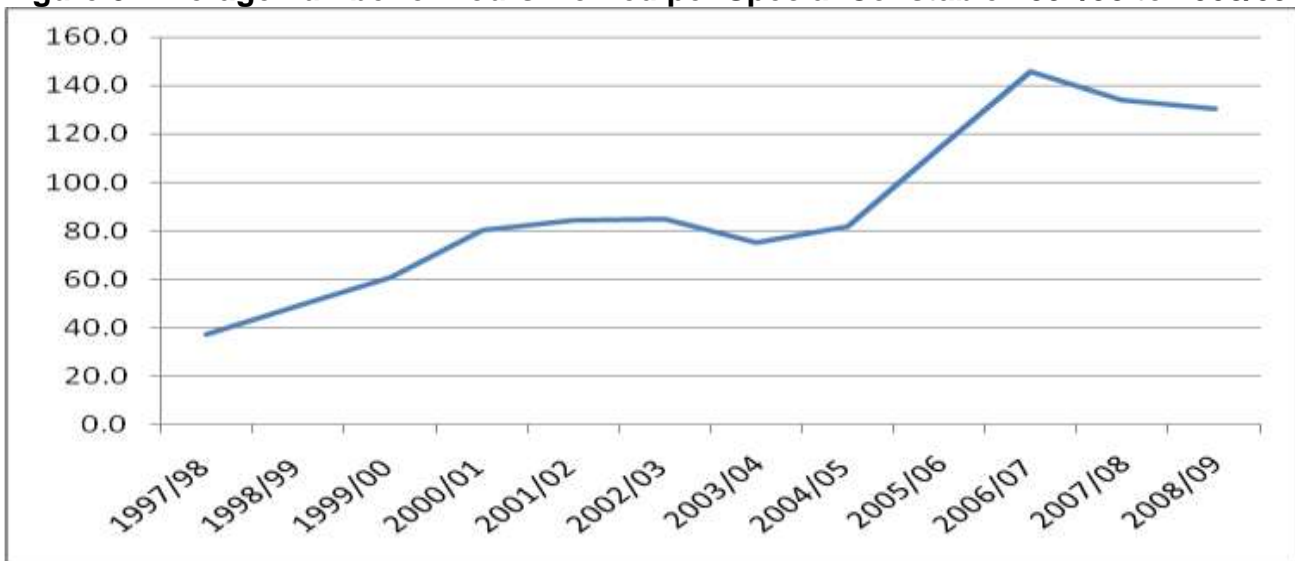
Figure 4, below, illustrates that a steady fall in the number of special constables up to 2003/04 was reversed in later years with a gradual climb to the 2008/09 level. This recent increase in the number of special constables employed by forces is mirrored by an even more marked increase in the number of hours worked by these officers since 2003/04. In 2003/04, special constables worked a total of 85,454 hours, rising to 212,950 hours by 2006/07. The number of hours worked per special constable has also risen significantly over this period with the average hours worked per officer nearly doubling from 75.3 hours in 2003/04 to 145.6 hours by 2006/07, falling slightly to 130.5 hours in 2008/09 (figure 5).

Figure 4: Special Constables in Scottish Police Forces 1997/98 to 2008/09



Source: HMICS Statistics – Special Constables in Scottish police forces (March 2009)

Figure 5: Average number of hours worked per Special Constable 1997/98 to 2008/09



Source: HMICS Statistics - Special Constables – Number of hours worked (March 2009)

POLICE DUTIES AND POWERS

The Police (Scotland) Act 1967 details the general functions of the police and imposes on them the duties to guard, patrol and watch so as to prevent the commission of offences; preserve order; and protect life and property. They are provided with powers through both common law and statutory law to carry out these duties, including powers of arrest and detention. The police have responsibility for a wide range of functions. As well as general policing, there are a number of more specialised tasks including criminal investigation, traffic management and community liaison.

POLICE SUPPORT SERVICES

The Scottish Police Services Authority

The [Scottish Police Services Authority](#) (SPSA) was established in April 2007 by the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006. The SPSA is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) which brings together a number of common police services including national police training through the Scottish Police College, police information and intelligence systems and day-to-day ICT support. The SPSA also provides the police service with a national, integrated 'crime scene to court' forensic service comprising the four police laboratories, four fingerprint bureaux and eight crime scene examination units. The SPSA is directly funded by the Scottish Government and has some 1,360 staff (FTE) (Dec 2010) and a budget of around £105 million (2010/11 - Audit Scotland). It is led by a Chief Executive and has a board comprising two Chief Constables, two police authority conveners and two independent members, chaired by an independent convener. The 2006 Act also sets out powers for the Scottish Ministers to specify, by order, additional support services to be provided by the SPSA to the Scottish police forces on a national basis.

The Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency

In addition, the SPSA maintains the specialist frontline officers and intelligence staff of the [Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency](#) (SCDEA). The SCDEA is also an NDPB and, like the SPSA, is accountable to the Scottish Parliament through Scottish Ministers. However, the Director General of the SCDEA has responsibility for all operational matters. The Scottish Ministers have a mandate to set strategic priorities for the SCDEA against which performance is reported annually.

ADMINISTRATION

The Police (Scotland) Act 1967 provides for a 'tripartite' sharing of responsibility for policing between: (a) the Scottish Ministers; (b) police authorities or joint police boards; and (c) Chief Constables. Their respective functions are considered below.

The Scottish Ministers

The Scottish Ministers have overall responsibility for policing policy in Scotland. In carrying out this responsibility they are answerable to the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Ministers have the power to make regulations concerning the terms and conditions, and certain duties, of police officers. In exercising this power they are advised by the UK [Police Negotiating Board](#) (pay and conditions) and the Police Advisory Board for Scotland (other matters).

Police Authorities and Joint Police Boards

Both police authorities and joint police boards are made up of local authority councillors. Since the reorganisation of local government into unitary local authorities in 1996, two of the eight Scottish police forces (Dumfries & Galloway and Fife) have been administered by police authorities. Each police authority covers a single local authority area and consists of councillors from that local authority (eg the police authority for Fife Constabulary consists of councillors elected to Fife Council). The other six police forces are each covered by joint police boards,

each of which consists of representatives from the councils within the relevant force area (eg the joint police board for Grampian Police consists of councillors elected to Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils).

The term 'police authority' is used in the rest of this briefing to mean both police authorities and joint police boards.

The relevant police authority:

- sets the budget for its force (see section on police funding below)
- appoints senior police officers (with the agreement of the Scottish Ministers)
- determines the numbers of police officers and civilian support staff for its area
- appoints civilian support staff (such staff, once appointed, come under the control of the Chief Constable)
- plays a role in securing best value and continuous improvement within its force

Chief Constables

The most senior police officer in each of the eight police forces is a Chief Constable. Chief Constables are appointed by the relevant police authority after consultation with and subject to the approval of the Scottish Ministers.

Chief Constables have sole responsibility for operational decisions about police deployment and enforcing the law in their areas.³ Chief Constables also appoint all police officers, up to and including the rank of superintendent, for their police forces.

The Scottish Policing Board

The Scottish Policing Board was set up in November 2009 following an Independent Review of Policing (Scottish Government (2009b)). The Board brings together the Scottish Government, the police, Police Authority Conveners and COSLA. Its remit includes providing a forum to identify key national strategic priorities, to add impetus to activities of collective importance and to identify key issues on which to develop a collective position. The Board has met eight times with its last meeting on 21 June 2011.

Scottish Policing Performance Framework

In relation to the measurement and reporting of police performance, the [Scottish Policing Performance Framework](#) (SPPF) was published by the Scottish Government in March 2007 (2007). The key aims of the SPPF are:

- to develop a single suite of performance measures that reflects the breadth and variety of policing activity across Scotland

³ This is subject to the power of the Lord Advocate and the local Procurator Fiscal to direct the police in relation to the investigation of crime.

- to create a framework that supports managers throughout the police service in understanding, reflecting on and improving performance so that forces can provide more effective policing in Scottish communities
- to provide a mechanism for better accountability at local and national levels, through the publication of consistent and transparent performance information that will support the Scottish Government, Police Authorities and the general public in their understanding of policing performance
- to provide a basis for robust performance management and, in turn, performance improvement

The framework has been in place since 1 April 2007. Since then, it has been [amended](#) to include a number of new and revised indicators and to achieve greater co-ordination with other performance assessment tools such as ACPOS' [Scottish Strategic Assessment](#) and the Scottish Government's [Purpose and Strategic Objectives](#). The [Accounts Commission's](#) Statutory Performance Indicators are also incorporated within the SPPF.

POLICE FUNDING

For 2011/12, total expenditure on the police in Scotland was in excess of £1.37bn. This funding comes from two sources:

- direct from the Scottish Government – in excess of £420m
- From local authorities – estimated to be in excess of £950m, including £480m in ring-fenced grants from central government to police authorities and joint police boards

Direct central government funding (set out within the Justice portfolio of the supporting documents to the budget bill for year ending 31 March 2012) includes:

- Police Central Government – funding for the SPSA (including the SCDEA) as well as providing additional support to police forces for specific initiatives. For 2011/12 this funding totalled over £209m⁴ (Scottish Government 2011, [Justice Schedule 3.6](#))
- Police pensions – funding for police authorities to meet the pension costs of police officers (transferred from the local government budget in 2010/11). The proposed budget for police pensions for 2011/12 was just over £211m. (Scottish Government 2011, [Justice Schedule 3.9](#))

Central government also provides monies within the local government settlement specifically for police services, including:

- Police grant – this is a ring-fenced grant paid to each police authority or joint board (included within the Local Government portfolio of the annual draft budget document). In practice, the police grant (discussed in more detail below) provides around one-half of the money spent on police services by local authorities. For 2011-12, the ring-fenced police grant totalled £480.3m. (Scottish Government 2011, [Local Government Schedule 3.1](#)). [The Police Grant \(Scotland\) Order 2011](#) sets the aggregate amount of police grant for 2011/12 at £691.9 million. This figure includes funding for police officer pensions of over £211m

⁴ Made up of £206.8m (Schedule 3.6) plus £2.6m in SPSA/SCDEA budget for depreciation.

- Loan Charges Support⁵ which was £9m for 2011-12
- Police Capital Grant – covering expenditure on fixed assets such as police stations. Support for police capital expenditure is no longer ring-fenced and is included in the general local authority settlement

Local authorities provide the remaining funding to police forces from Revenue Support Grant, non-domestic rate income⁶ and the council tax. For 2011-12, the local government contribution to police funding is estimated to be around £462m⁷.

Police Grant Aided Expenditure

Grant aided expenditure (GAE) is the system through which the Scottish Government allocates pre-determined Spending Review expenditure equitably amongst local authorities. Scottish Ministers make an annual determination of the total for police GAE to be made available to police authorities who set the budgets for their respective forces at, above, or below GAE. GAE is the amount the Government calculates that a police authority needs to spend to provide a similar level of services at a similar level of efficiency to other police authorities. Scottish Ministers then provide police grant (see above) at 51% of the net eligible expenditure incurred by forces up to the GAE level. Traditionally, constituent local authorities then provided the remaining 49% from their own resources, including Revenue Support Grant.

However, following agreement of the [Concordat between the Scottish Government and local authorities](#) in November 2007, a new approach to local government funding was adopted. In return for an agreement by local authorities to deliver a specified set of commitments over this period, including freezing the council tax and maintaining police officers numbers at a minimum of 17,234⁸, the Government offered a £34.4 billion three year funding package and agreed to substantially reduce the number of ring-fenced grants. While, under the agreement, Police Grant would remain ring-fenced, there would no longer be a specific ring-fenced Police GAE figure with the resources for policing, both revenue and capital, being included within the wider total local government settlement. The amount local authorities provided to police authorities would, therefore, no longer be linked to the level of police grant. Under the Concordat, the overall increases in funding would be distributed on the basis of 2007/08 GAE shares, updated annually by the relevant needs-based indicators.

This arrangement was originally intended to last for the three year period from 2008/09 to 2010/11 but was retained for 2011/12 following the recommendations of the [Local Government Finance Distribution Review Officer Group](#) (September 2009).

The Scottish Government's "'Green Book' for Grant Aided Expenditure 2011/12" (2011b) set Police GAE for 2011/12 at just over £966 million. In 2010/11, responsibility for police pensions was transferred from local government to central government so is no longer included in the local government settlement. Hence, the total of Police GAE has been reduced. From 2007/08, the Scottish Government has also been meeting the salary costs of 1,000 'additional' police officers through payments made directly to forces. From 2007/08, the Scottish Government has

⁵ In 2004/05 Joint boards moved to being funded directly by capital grant rather than through a supported borrowing allocation. Loan Charges Support for this debt reflects allocations made to joint boards prior to 2004/05.

⁶ Non-domestic rates are collected by all 32 authorities on the basis of a national poundage set by the Scottish Government, paid into a central pool and with effect from 1 April 2012, redistributed to councils based on how much each local authority is expected to collect.

⁷ Based on estimated local government expenditure of £951.3m (figure taken from Table 2 Scottish Government Statistics Publication Notice, Provisional Outturn 2010-11 and Budget Estimates 2011-12) less police grant (£480.3m) and loan charges (£9m)

⁸ 1,000 more police officers than the number in place on 31 March 2007, before the SNP Government came to power in May 2007.

provided increased funding to meet the additional costs of police and fire pensions. As noted above, liability for police (and fire) pensions transferred from Police Authorities to the Scottish Government in 2010/11.

HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY FOR SCOTLAND

[Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland](#) (HMIC) seeks to monitor and improve the police service in Scotland. It does this by inspecting and reporting on the Scottish police forces and providing advice to the Scottish Ministers.

HMIC has no statutory power to enforce compliance with any of its recommendations but does publish various reports, including:

- annual reports
- reports on individual police forces, the SPSA (including police support services provided by the SPSA) and the SCDEA – providing information on the performance of the organisations
- reports on 'thematic inspections' which focus on particular themes across all police organisations (eg performance management or family liaison)

HMIC is independent of the police forces, police authorities and Scottish Government. Its staff includes HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary (normally a police officer of ACPOS rank), the Lay Inspector (with no police background), police officers on secondment from police forces and civil servants employed by the Scottish Government.

POLICE COMPLAINTS

Overview

The system for investigating complaints made against police officers includes the following elements:

- investigation of complaints by a senior police officer ('the investigating officer')
- an Assistant or Deputy Chief Constable determining, on the basis of a report produced by the investigating officer, an appropriate course of action
- the possibility of a police officer, who may have acted in an inappropriate fashion without committing a criminal offence, being dealt with under police misconduct procedures
- the referral of the matter to the relevant area procurator fiscal for investigation and possible prosecution (following further consideration by Crown Office), where it appears that a police officer may have committed a criminal offence
- the oversight of non-criminal complaints against the police by the Police Complaints Commissioner for Scotland

The police also deal with non-criminal complaints which are not about particular individuals but which may instead raise issues about the standard of service delivery.

The Police Complaints Commissioner

The Police Complaints Commissioner ('the Commissioner') was created by the Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006 as an independent organisation unconnected to the police. The Commissioner took up his functions on 1 April 2007 and, since then, has been responsible for reviewing complaints about the police.

The Commissioner has powers to conduct independent scrutiny of the way the police handle non-criminal complaints from the public and to set standards for complaints handling by the police. Depending on the outcome of the review, the Commissioner can direct the force in question to reconsider the complaint. The Commissioner also has a general responsibility for ensuring that police forces and organisations in Scotland have in place appropriate procedures for handling complaints and that these procedures are followed effectively.

The Commissioner cannot consider any allegation that infers a criminal act as that remains a matter for the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

Reviewing the role of the Police Complaints Commissioner

In December 2010, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill MSP, wrote to stakeholders for their views on a proposal to transfer the functions of the Commissioner to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). This proposal stems from a recommendation in the report of the [Fit for Purpose Complaints Action Group](#) (Sinclair, D) which was set up following the [Crerar Review](#) of Complaints Handling of Public Services in Scotland to provide Ministers with proposals for simplifying and streamlining public service complaints handling processes. Among other things, the Action Group recommended:

“Retaining the police complaints framework, which is still being embedded, and allow this to develop further, but the case for merging with the SPSO should be considered during the next Parliamentary session. The PCCS should endeavour to share services with the SPSO where practically possible”. (Page 4, paragraph 5)

While many respondents to the Cabinet Secretary's proposal recognised a potential value in reviewing the role of the PCCS, several expressed the hope that the specialist expertise developed by the PCCS should not be lost in any transfer of function. There was also concern over the capacity of the SPSO to subsume the workload of the PCCS and over the timing of this proposal so close to the consultation on the future of policing in Scotland. Several respondents pointed out that, should the number of forces in Scotland be reduced, there would be a stronger case for retaining an independent Police Complaints Commissioner.

REFORM OF THE POLICE SERVICE

The Police Service in Scotland is facing a period of uncertainty and change. Along with the rest of the public service, funding for the police is reducing and forces are being required to manage significant budget cuts while continuing to respond to high levels of demand and maintaining police officer numbers at or near record levels. Against this backdrop, the Scottish Government has stated its intention to carry out a fundamental review the Police Service.

Sustainable Policing Sub Group

In September 2010, the Scottish Policing Board set up a Sustainable Policing Sub Group to take forward work, begun by ACPOS, to meet the financial challenges posed by reduced police budgets. This work included looking at options for structural change. The first report of the

Sustainable Policing Project Team was considered by the Scottish Policing Board in December 2010.

The [Phase Two Report: Options for Reform](#), published in March 2011 (Scottish Government 2011f), built on the work of Phase 1 but concentrated primarily on policing functions rather than structures. Ten functional areas for police services were identified and allocated to 'Lead Professionals' who were given the task of constructing a target delivery model for each policing function. The potential benefits of each target model were defined in terms of both policing effectiveness and efficiency and then brought together to create a whole policing model (Target Operating Model).

Three different structural models were then considered on their ability to deliver efficient and effective policing and were applied to the Target Operating Model. The structural models were: a single force structure; a regional structure; and an improved eight force structure. The report observes that, while the three structural models had much in common, including structuring local policing services around local authority boundaries and maintaining a number of specialist functions with national command structures:

"The single force model represents the most significant change; however it provides the greatest opportunity to manage change, drive efficiency and in delivering operations when the change is complete. The eight force model represents the opposite". (Page 5, paragraph 15)

The report goes on to say that:

"because any one of the three structural frameworks could be applied on top of the Target Operating Model for policing services, all would represent significant change – change that would be challenging to deliver and would require significant investment to realise benefits". (Page 5, paragraph 16)

The Report calculates potential annual savings of almost £154 million if the Target Operating Model were to be adopted, though some of these savings would take between three to five years to be realised (Page 55, Table 9). It should be noted that these savings relate to the adoption of the Target Operating Model rather than to a particular force structure. The Report applies a 6:10 benchmark investment to benefit ratio to estimate transition costs to the Target Operating Model at a maximum of £92 million across the life of the change programme.

Scottish Government Consultation on the Future of Policing in Scotland

In February 2011, the Scottish Government took forward their intention to review the Police Service by issuing a [consultation on the future of policing in Scotland](#), stating that, "(...) the option of the current eight forces with enhanced collaboration will not provide the savings necessary or the enhanced service required to meet the challenges of the 21st century". Like the Sustainable Policing Sub Group, the consultation document set out three options for reform:

- keeping the current eight forces with enhanced collaboration
- a regional model of three or four forces
- a single police service for Scotland

This consultation closed on 5 May 2011 with 219 responses received. Following the consultation, Ministers and government officials undertook a wide range of meetings and events across Scotland to discuss the key issues raised. Together, the consultation and these meetings and events, identified the key aims of reform as:

“(…) improved local services and delivery of better outcomes, strengthened accountability, and the delivery of efficiencies required to protect local policing in communities in the face of long-term budget reductions”. (Scottish Government 2011g)

While many respondents agreed that the police service was in need of reform some aspects of the consultation process were criticised. For example, COSLA were critical of the speed with which the consultation was carried out and argued that the options offered were too limited and should have included other options such as a ‘single blue-light option’⁹. Moreover, COSLA believes that police reform should not be carried out in isolation but should be part of a holistic review of the whole public sector.

Both COSLA and ACPOS also highlighted the dangers of concentrating on structural reform with COSLA stating:

“(…) police reform should not focus on structures and boundaries to the exclusion of other issues relating to finance, policy, systems and governance.” (COSLA, 2011)

Similarly, ACPOS have argued that:

“The evidence must demonstrate that current structures inhibit the achievement of positive outcomes and that alternative structures will enhance the position.” (ACPOS, 2011)

There was some support for a move to a single police force, most notably perhaps from the Association of Scottish Police Superintendants (ASPS), who stated in their response to the government consultation:

“(…) if we are going to change we should do it only once. That is why we support the strategic direction to introduce a single Police Service in Scotland.

The majority of respondents, however, seemed to prefer the current eight force structure with greater collaboration.

Three principal concerns emerged from the consultation responses. These were how to ensure that police reform would:

- protect local policing in communities – ensuring local services that work effectively in partnership
- strengthen local accountability
- put in place arrangements for national governance to avoid political interference in the enforcement of the law

An announcement by the Government on the future structure for the Scottish Police Service is expected in early September. This will be followed by a Police and Fire Services Reform Bill expected early next year.

Whatever the force structure chosen, the announcement is certain to be the precursor to extensive debate around the detail of that structure, about appropriate governance arrangements and about ensuring the accountability, particularly local accountability, of the Police Service.

⁹ ‘Single blue-light option’ refers to the integration of the Police Service with the Scottish Ambulance Service and the Fire Service.

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