

# **Reforming Police Structures: A Review of UK and International Evidence**

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## **Purpose**

This review was commissioned by DCC Neil Richardson, head of the Sustainable Policing Project, to inform work being undertaken to provide a professional and financial assessment of options for police reform in Scotland. Due to the lack of clarity surrounding the transferability of evidence on police reform from other jurisdictions, the focus of this review will be on the identification and likely impact of risks and lessons learned, rather than on the estimation of particular costs or benefits – which are being considered by other elements of the project.

## **Introduction**

This review discusses the available UK and international evidence regarding the reform of police structures, focusing on the impacts and implications of force mergers with respect to the following:

- Size, structure and performance (p.3).
- The delivery of local policing (p.6).
- The provision of protective services (p.8).
- Police roles, careers and skills (p.10).
- Governance and accountability (p.12).
- Costs and disruptive aspects of mergers (p.14).

It is important at the outset to emphasise that the available evidence with regard to all these areas varies considerably in terms of both quantity and quality. With limited exceptions (such as in Denmark), there have been few systematic evaluations of the impact of mergers on police activity and much of the evidence is quite equivocal;

allowing one to make a number of plausible arguments both in favour of and against force mergers. Rarely is the evidence of sufficient quality to provide a clear and robust answer to the important questions which force mergers raise. For each of the 6 areas identified above, a summary table of the findings is provided followed by a more detailed discussion of the evidence. A table providing a summary of police structures and numbers for several countries is also included (Appendix 1).

### **Methodology and criteria for classification of evidence**

This review draws on several database searches, namely:

- a search for information, over the last 10 years, on police force restructuring using keywords 'Police force', 'Police service', 'Merge', and 'Amalgamation'<sup>1</sup>;
- an EBSCO host search on police restructuring; and
- searches of Dundee CrossSearch and the British Library Integrated Catalogue for further relevant material.

The review also drew on reading recommendations from appropriate experts; citations in documents analysed; and HMICS and Sustainable Policing Project documents. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to review all of the available material. The accessibility of material (online, in the British Library, via the Scottish Police College Library or through appropriate experts) was one significant factor in its inclusion in the review and it was only possible to include English-language material.

The following criteria also informed the inclusion of sources:

- A context-based assessment of the likely quality/impact of the sources (for example, publication outlet or citations in other prominent places).
- Expert recommendations - the sources that academic and policy experts view as important.
- An assessment of the robustness and usefulness of the source itself.

On the basis of the above, it is therefore possible that the findings and conclusions of this review may be biased to some extent by the necessarily pragmatic methodology employed.

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<sup>1</sup> Including the following databases:

EBSCOhost Research Databases: Academic Search Premier, SocINDEX, Criminal Justice Abstracts, International Bibliography of Social Sciences.

CSA Collections. Includes: ASSIA, Econlit, National Criminal Justice Reference Service Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, PAIS International.

OCLC: Ebooks, ECO, ArticleFirst, WilsonSelectPlus, WorldCat, IDOX, IngentaConnect, Urbaline, Scirus, Ebsco, Cross-search.

In the summary tables, there has been an attempt to classify the relative strength of the evidence relating to particular findings or arguments using the terms ‘Strong’, ‘Moderate’ and ‘Weak’. ‘Strong’ indicates there is ostensibly good-quality evidence supporting this position (for example, peer-reviewed publications or outputs from a good-quality research project) or the position is backed by a degree of consensus. ‘Moderate’ indicates there may be good-quality but relatively sparse evidence, the evidence may be contested and/or it may be unclear whether/what evidence can be generalised to Scotland – including where the drivers of change are of particular relevance. ‘Weak’ indicates there may be significant criticisms regarding the approaches used in generating this evidence or there could be other serious questions about the value of the evidence.

### **Size, structure and performance**

#### *Summary*

<b>Key findings and arguments</b>	<b>Type and source of evidence</b>	<b>List of documents reviewed</b>	<b>Assessment of relative strength of evidence</b>
Economic research suggests a complex relationship between size and efficiency, such that intermediate-sized forces in England and Wales tended to have higher ‘scale efficiency’, but lower ‘pure technical efficiency’ than the largest or smallest forces.	Largely quantitative, UK academic evidence.	Drake & Simper (2000) Simper and Weyman-Jones (2006)	Strong: Some research published in peer-reviewed outlet and therefore thought to be methodologically robust.
There are concerns that merging and/or centralising forces might reduce efficiency.	Largely qualitative academic evidence, both UK and international.	Loveday (2006)	Moderate: Plausible theoretical arguments with some empirical support.

<b>Key findings and arguments</b>	<b>Type and source of evidence</b>	<b>List of documents reviewed</b>	<b>Assessment of relative strength of evidence</b>
Concentrating administrative activities (especially financial and salary administration) may bring about financial saving but mergers may increase other costs in the longer term (for example, as a result of enhancing facilities and harmonising working conditions).	Qualitative evidence from international forces; academic and policy sources.	Loveday (2007) McDavid (2002)	Moderate: Several empirical examples of this happening internationally.
The Garda offers an example where it is felt that acting as a unitary force enhances efficiency.	Qualitative practitioner evidence.	Scobbie (2010a)	Moderate: Some empirical evidence
Factors other than force size (for example, workforce modernisation and devolution of powers to the local level) may be as or more significant in seeking efficiencies.	UK and international academic and policy sources.	Loveday (2006) Loveday (2007)	Moderate: Sufficient evidence to indicate that these questions should be considered.

### *Discussion*

Central to many of the debates surrounding police force restructuring are the complex relationships between force size, structure and performance. Evidence of robust causal relationships in this field, however, are hard to find although there is some strong UK evidence from economic modelling that particular sizes of force may offer greater efficiencies of a certain type.

Using a range of input data for each police force in England and Wales (covering employment costs, premises-related expenses, transport-related expenses and capital/other costs) and output measures (clear-up rates and the total number of traffic offences that the police and contracted civilian staff (such as traffic wardens) deal with in a year), Drake and Simper (2000) found that intermediate-sized forces in England and Wales tended to be more efficient (when one considers scale efficiency) than the largest or smallest forces, concluding that there was 'evidence of significant increasing and decreasing returns ... at the extremes of the size spectrum, ...supportive of a "saucer-shaped" average cost curve in policing' (p.72).

However, these authors also acknowledged that in terms of pure technical efficiency, it was the smallest and largest forces that tended to do better, and in a currently unpublished paper Simper and Weyman-Jones (2006) also argued that 'English and Welsh police force mergers could lead to increases in police staff resource efficiencies between 10% and 70%' (p.1).

A slightly different perspective on the UK context is offered by Loveday who argues that there is no robust evidence that large forces outperform smaller forces. 'There is no evidence', Loveday (2006) contends, 'that big forces perform better than small ones. Though force performance varies widely, even amongst those covering socio-economically similar areas, this does not correlate to force size' (p.9). While this is, in itself, not incompatible with Drake and Simper's argument that intermediate-sized forces are more efficient in some sense, Loveday (2007) opposes mergers in England and Wales and highlights how inefficiencies can be linked to centralisation.

This point is taken up in a Canadian context by McDavid (2002), who argues (while noting limitations to the available data) the following:

*Research on the impacts of amalgamating police departments tends to support the conclusion that costs increase, and, where they do not, service levels are reduced as the number of sworn officers are reduced...There do not appear to be any substantial economies of scale in the production of police services overall. There may well be scale economies in the production of support services like communications, records, identification and crime lab functions but these are more than offset by the substantial labour cost increases that are usually associated with amalgamations. Where costs have decreased, there have been corresponding decreases in service levels. In some cases, post-amalgamation cost-increases have also been accompanied by service decreases. (pp. 542-544)*

In making this argument, the examples McDavid draws on are mainly from the US and Canada and there are therefore questions regarding to what extent this can be generalised to the UK. By contrast, and writing from a practitioner perspective, Scobbie (2010a) relays a more positive case for amalgamation by using the example of the Garda as a national, unitary force. A Garda representative, quoted by Scobbie argues that:

*There is enormous advantage in being a unitary force...we need only one ... HR department, one IT section, one change management section, one policy section, one security section, one national traffic unit etc. The cooperation and coordination benefits are enormous and the reduction in resource waste is very significant. (p.6)*

Despite the focus on merging forces, however, a merger is not the only way of bringing many of the benefits which come with size; it is plausible that some other

options for police reform may bring greater savings or better performance than mergers. Loveday (2006, 2007) for example, presents arguments for voluntary federation instead of amalgamation or focussing reform efforts on workforce modernisation.

## Local Policing

### Summary

Key findings and arguments	Type and source of evidence	List of documents reviewed	Assessment of relative strength of evidence
There is a risk that merging forces will impair local policing.	Largely qualitative and academic evidence, from UK and international forces.	Loveday (2006) Brain (2010) Holmberg (2010)	Moderate: Detailed examples of problems encountered after merging forces/policing districts, especially from Denmark.
Merging forces will not necessarily damage local policing.	Qualitative UK and international evidence; both academic and policy sources.	O'Connor (2005) Gatfield-McGloin (2006) Sprinks (2005)	Moderate: Arguments are theoretically plausible and have some empirical support.
There is a risk that mergers will marginalise local policing and encourage officers to work in other more specialist areas of policing.	Qualitative evidence from UK and international forces and academic sources.	Loveday (2005)	Moderate: Arguments are theoretically plausible with some empirical support.

### Discussion

Perhaps one of the most emotive and politically sensitive issues surrounding police reform is the effect that mergers might have on local policing. Within the literature, however, there is a lack of consensus among contributors to the debate on what the nature of the effects might be. On the one hand, several contributors raise concerns that merging forces will impair performance in local policing. Loveday (2006), for example, argues that merging forces can be seen as a way to 'further remove policing from the community' (p.31), and a former Chief Constable argues that previous UK mergers did cause problems in the relationship between forces and their communities (Brain, 2010).

There are also concerns that merging forces might reduce police responsiveness to communities due to this distancing, and that these changes might undermine neighbourhood policing strategy (Loveday, 2006). Also, if specialist units achieve an increasing prominence (as may be the case in large forces) it may become harder for officers to achieve promotion without serving in such units (Loveday 2005); this could incentivise career-minded officers to move away from local policing.

Notwithstanding different circumstances in that there was already a national police force in place, the evaluation of Danish police reform also offers support for concerns regarding the effects of mergers on local policing<sup>2</sup>. While Denmark had a background of proximity policing, merging policing districts (from 54 to 12 districts) led to citizens viewing police as less visible and to a drop over time in citizens' belief that police were effective and available locally (Holmberg, 2010). It was also argued that 'Large districts mean large distances, both in the physical and the mental sense' (Holmberg, 2010, p.9). Furthermore, partner agencies thought that reform:

- failed to bring the expected professionalization of policing;
- reduced local police presence and knowledge; and
- produced a more hierarchical and centralised police service.

On the other hand, however, other contributors to this debate suggest that this does not mean that these threats will always be realised and that reform will inevitably damage local policing. HMIC in England and Wales thus argue that

*[t]here is...nothing incompatible between a move towards a more strategic organisation and a concentration on delivering more responsive neighbourhood policing. Strong neighbourhood policing is essential to connect with the public and inform the work of protective services. A force which is big enough to deliver protection, but still small enough to identify with local communities, is an attractive one."* (HMIC, 2005, p.77)

Along related lines Gatfield-McGloin (2006) notes that there is a long history of unfounded concerns about police reform damaging local policing.

Gatfield-McGloin and HMIC therefore both argue that moving to larger forces will not necessarily lead to a decline in local policing; there is no inherent characteristic of large police forces which rules out using them for effective neighbourhood policing.

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, these declines in certain metrics coincided with apparent benefits in others. For example, according to police performance data, management time was trimmed by the mergers and average response time to emergency calls improved (Cupples and Watson, 2010, 4-7).

Also, manipulation of other variables (for example, high funding and staffing levels) might allow good neighbourhood policing performance to sit alongside a wide variety of force structures. In addition to this, one could plausibly argue that if a merger allows cuts to back office functions then this might free additional resources for front line work (Sprinks 2005).

## Protective Services

### Summary

Key findings and arguments	Type and source of evidence	List of documents reviewed	Assessment of relative strength of evidence
Larger forces can offer enhanced protective services.	Qualitative and some quantitative evidence from UK and international forces.	Griffiths and Easton (2008) Koepsell and Girrard (1979) Johnson (2000) O'Connor (2005) Lawrance (2006) Loveday (2005)	Moderate: Larger forces can be one way to support more extensive protective services. This evidence is most compelling with comparatively small US forces in small communities. However, it is unclear to what extent this can be generalised and quantitative evidence from England and Wales supporting the need for larger forces has been strongly criticised for flaws in its statistical analysis.
Protective services can be provided by very diverse structures. While some services will require a certain volume of work in order to be feasible, this can be possible through collaboration rather than mergers.	Largely qualitative evidence from UK and international forces.	Virta (2002) Kahana (2002)	Strong: theoretically compelling and supported by multiple examples of effective functioning.

### Discussion

International evidence indicates that merging forces may – in some circumstances – allow more unified procedures for dealing with major incidents such as terrorist attacks (Griffiths and Easton, 2008). Arguments for using such mergers to increase capacity to provide such services are perhaps strongest when one is considering very small forces (for example, independent small town forces in the US). Here, Koepsell and Girrard (1979) argue that consolidation is often used to provide more services or to fix issues around overlap. Johnson (2000) offers more recent examples of successful small town consolidations. However, it is unclear to what extent the

merger of such small forces is relevant with regards to significantly larger Scottish forces which already have greater capacity.

Perhaps the most notable UK claim that capacity to provide protective services increases alongside force size is from HMIC (2005); they have argued that there is a statistically significant correlation between force size in England and Wales and their capacity to offer protective services. However, this has been heavily criticised; Lawrance (2006) summarises concerns about these statistics by arguing that *[t]he quality of the statistical information gathered for the report is questionable... The statistical treatment of the data collected is largely unjustified and appears open to criticism in its combinations of scores... The graphical presentation of the data is poor and trend lines could be misleading.* (p.82)

Importantly, HMIC's figures do not show variability decreasing as force size increases; as Lawrance notes, "the contrary appears to be the case" (Lawrance 2006, p.82). Loveday (2005) finds that the HMIC report also failed to appropriately incorporate discussion of collaboration and 'workforce modernisation'; two factors which could very plausibly impact upon capacity.

There are significant international differences in possible force structures, ranging from centralised national forces to what has been described in Finland as 'policing through networks' (Virta 2002).<sup>3</sup> Awareness of this international context highlights how a wide variety of structures can provide protective services, assuming that other factors are in place to enable provision. International examples indicate how even very diffuse force structures can deal with serious issues of crime and security; for example, there are strikingly complex relationships between Israel's different security agencies but they still deal with major concerns around terrorism and security (Kahana 2002).

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<sup>3</sup> Virta argues that community policing in Finland has led to a move to networks of diverse interest groups (Virta 2002, 190).

## Police roles, careers and skills

### Summary

Key findings and propositions	Type and source of evidence	List of documents reviewed	Assessment of relative strength of evidence
Mergers risk loss of skills and competence if relocation is badly managed.	Largely qualitative international evidence; academic source.	Holmberg (2010)	Strong: empirical example, strong source and theoretically plausible.
Mergers can disrupt the way in which individuals and employers relate to one another.	Largely qualitative international evidence; academic source.	Stinchcomb and Ordaz (2007)	Strong: well-argued, with empirical examples.
Mergers can cause changes in roles available for senior staff (risk of some leaving the police and of certain roles in large forces requiring scarce/unavailable skills and experience).	Qualitative UK evidence; academic and policy sources.	Pertile (2006)	Moderate: some empirical evidence and theoretically highly plausible.
Risk that police may be pushed away from local policing if they want to advance their careers	Largely qualitative UK and international evidence; largely academic sources.	Collantes Celador (2009) Loveday (2005)	Moderate: theoretically plausible and with supporting expert opinion.

### Discussion

Restructuring can have significant impacts on police roles, careers and skills. If staff leave or are required to occupy new positions in new locations as a result of larger-scale reforms, this can lead to major risks. Holmberg argues that, in Denmark, ‘Restructuring led to a serious loss of competence on almost all levels’ (Holmberg, 2010, p.15), partly because some officers and police staff were not prepared to travel the extra distance to take up posts in new headquarters and partly because officers who moved to new areas within the larger police districts often had little local knowledge. Broader cultural issues are also significant. Stinchcomb and Ordaz (2007) argue that organisational cultures are important when considering police mergers and that that mergers can disrupt the organisation-individual fit. Drawing on a US example of merging police and fire-rescue services, they noted significant implications for career expectations.

*... strategies pursued to maintain a secure person–environment fit included efforts to familiarize employees with the culture of the new work setting, address their uncertainties, respond to their concerns, and integrate them into a collaborative transition process” (p.158)*

Stinchcomb and Ordaz (2007) also note raised expectations around both sides of the 'unwritten quid pro quo contract' between employer and employee, stating that 'in exchange for better benefits and job security, more accountability and productivity were expected' (p.158). More broadly, they argue that '[b]ecause they strike the most sensitive nerves of the psycho-social relationship between organizations and the people they employ, mergers are inherently painful to those involved' (p.159). In terms of mitigating the risks and harms involved in mergers, Stinchcomb and Ordaz (2007) argue that '[t]he antidote to such painful dislocations is being sensitive to organizational culture. The alternative is to continue being painfully disappointed with the outcome' (p.159).

Force mergers, it is argued, could also be significant with regards to senior staff in terms of bringing significant changes to the opportunities available for officers at and near the rank of Chief Constable (Pertile 2006). A reduction in the number of top-level positions could also limit intra-national opportunities for progression of other relatively high-ranking officers and senior civilian staff. It has also been argued that the saleable skills of senior civilian staff means that they may be especially likely to be lost to the private sector (Pertile, 2006).

Recruiting staff with the appropriate skills and experience for senior roles in a single large force may also be an issue. As reported by Pertile (2006), Colin Cramphorn (then Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police) argued that only relatively few individuals would have the skills needed for top-level posts in very large forces.

*... you need individuals who have experience of running organisations of that sort of scale... The only way you can really get experience of running an organisation of that size within a period of intense change is either by working in Northern Ireland or the Met...I think there is actually a much narrower field of candidates for jobs in the larger, strategic forces" (Pertile 2006, p.20).*

According to some commentators on this issue, overspecialisation can be an additional staffing issue where services are centralised (e.g. Collantes Celador, 2009). As noted above under Local Policing, if a larger force leads to increased resourcing and prioritising of specialist units then there is the risk that opportunities for career progression will be more limited for those working in neighbourhood policing (Loveday, 2005). Risks relating to police staff and the ability to recruit and retain staff into certain roles are thus potentially significant. A worst-case scenario would see a large-scale loss of competence, officers incentivised to neglect local

policing, reduced opportunities for senior staff and officers (pushing some into private sector work) and a paucity of appropriately qualified candidates for the new type of senior roles which become available with the creation of a much larger force.

## **Governance and Accountability**

### *Summary*

<b>Key findings and arguments</b>	<b>Type and source of evidence</b>	<b>List of documents reviewed</b>	<b>Assessment of relative strength of evidence</b>
Centralising, merging and reforming forces could cause problems for governance and accountability (for example, moving administration of policing further from local people, increasing distance between senior management and local operations).	Qualitative evidence from UK and international forces; academic and some policy/practitioner sources	Loveday (2006)	Moderate: Theoretically plausible and with some empirical support.
Merging forces would not, in itself, create problems for governance and accountability; a range of other variables are also significant.	Qualitative evidence from UK and international forces; academic and some policy/practitioner sources	Gatfield-McGloin (2006) Statskontoret (2010)	Moderate: Theoretically plausible and with some empirical support.

### *Discussion*

The way in which centralisation can distance many communities from the main seat of a force's governance creates additional challenges for restructuring, but it might also create new opportunities to reform what may be viewed as imperfect governance arrangements. From a review of the available literature, there is not robust evidence with which one can predict whether larger forces will impair or enhance governance, and other variables (from broader political changes to the funding situation) could also have significant impact.

Loveday (2006) argues that in England and Wales '[a]lmgamation would reduce police accountability and responsiveness by distancing force HQs from the communities they serve' (p.9)..However, Gatfield-McGloin (2006) point out that this may not *necessarily* be the case and that a range of other variables (for example, the

nature of the local governance which is put in place) are also significant<sup>4</sup> It is also interesting to note in relation to the experience in England, that plans to establish a North West England police force came after this region had rejected a move to regional governance.

Concerns are frequently expressed that the creation of national agencies will inevitably lead to stronger government control and influence but the experience from Sweden indicates this is not necessarily the case. Sweden has created 12 national agencies (so called “mono-agencies”) from what were previously local and regional agencies in areas like prisons, probation and prosecution (but not yet policing although this is under consideration), and it is argued that these new agencies have in fact ‘enjoyed a high degree of freedom to shape their own organisation and activities as they see fit. This represents a change in relation to the previous multi-agencies, whose organisation was largely determined by the Government in its official instructions. As a result of this new-found freedom, the mono-agencies apply various principles to their internal organisation, depending on what has been considered effective for their activities’.

The conclusion from an evaluation of several of these mono-agencies is that ‘the Government’s control of this major structural change in terms of administrative procedure has generally been weak’ (Statskontoret, 2010). Nevertheless, the same study also highlights governance difficulties associated with the way in which within mono-agencies there is increased distance between ‘top management and the operative level’ and that this has ‘affected the scope for achieving efficient management and governance of the agencies’ entire activities’.

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<sup>4</sup> It may be that Scotland’s geography provides a significant point of difference from England and Wales here: force areas currently cover ‘a unique mix of urban and rural communities with very different policing needs’ and the notably different policing needs of these diverse areas may impact in different ways within various governance structures (HMICS, 2009, p.8). Stephen Curran, convenor of Strathclyde Joint Police Authority, notes the different areas which can be contained within current force areas in order to argue that ‘Strathclyde covers 44% of the Scottish population in an area running from Tiree to Ballantrae, so we know all about preserving local accountability...If it can be done within Strathclyde, it can be done within Scotland.’ (Dinwoodie 2010).

## Costs and disruptive aspects of mergers

### Summary

Key findings and arguments	Type and source of evidence	List of documents reviewed	Assessment of relative strength of evidence
Mergers cause disruption and cost money (at least in the short term).	Largely qualitative international and UK evidence; academic and policy sources.	Brain (2010) Statskontoret (2010) Virta (2002)	Strong: empirical examples and theoretically plausible.
Mergers create the opportunity for significant and damaging mistakes. The disruption associated with mergers can be prolonged and worsened by a range of factors, including but not limited to under-resourcing; poor planning and management; and failing to consider relevant experiences elsewhere.	Largely qualitative international and UK evidence; academic and policy sources.	Virta (2002) Holmberg (2010)	Strong: empirical examples and theoretically plausible.

### Discussion

As is the case with organisational change in general, there are numerous examples of the disruption associated with police reform which can impair performance if the reforms are mishandled or under-resourced. In a UK context, Brain (2010) notes that previous force amalgamations had some significant impacts on the forces involved; traditions of forces were seen to be lost, there were tensions, and communities sometimes felt that the new forces are out of touch or were subsidising other areas. Brain goes on to argue how, when the Westminster government was seeking police mergers in the mid-1990s, it 'seem[ed] incredible' that the government would put so much time and effort into this idea mergers, and have police do the same, 'without fully understanding the financial requirements and difficulties' (p.373). Brain is critical of the idea – advanced in the mid-2000s – that one could simply rely on 'efficiencies' to fund mergers rather than supplying additional resources.

In Sweden, the evaluation of the impact of creating national agencies also emphasises that 'Major organisational reforms are costly, especially in the initial stages' (Statskontoret, 2010) and that there were often shortcomings when it comes

to estimating the costs of these reforms. Specific areas highlighted where costs arise include:

- restructuring costs for staff;
- costs of recruitment and skills development;
- introduction of new IT systems;
- costs of new premises when activities are relocated or new offices opened; and
- losses in terms of work efficiency during a transitional period when new units or concentrated activities are established.

In the case of Finland, Virta (2002) argues that reforms around community policing in some areas ran into problems because police were given a new task without new resources and because staff needed to reorient without enough training and education (p.194). Mishandling reform can cause significant additional disruption. In Denmark there is a widespread view that lack of resources was key to many of the problems associated with the merger of 54 police districts into 12 (Holmberg, 2010). Holmberg argues that Denmark overestimated capacity of the police to adapt; found technical problems harder than expected; had to deal with senior management who were too slow to acknowledge problems; and had problems caused by a lack of pre-implementation preparation. Holmberg also argues that Danish reform was accompanied by too much focus on monitoring/reporting and therefore too many demands for this type of activity; this pushed police to do ineffective things. Problems in Denmark were also caused because those working on restructuring failed to take enough account of experiences elsewhere (such as in Norway) (Holmberg, 2010).

## **Conclusions**

This review has focused on some of the impacts and implications of the restructuring of police forces via mergers and amalgamations and has drawn on a wide range of UK and international evidence. It is clear that, according to the available evidence reviewed here, there are no simple cause and effect relationships between increasing force size and specific outcomes, whether these relate to greater efficiency, local policing, the provision of protective services, or police governance.

There is however relatively strong evidence to suggest there are a range of risks involved in police restructuring which need to be carefully managed if the benefits of reform are to be realised. These include, in particular, the risk of loss of skills and competence; the risk of disruption to employer-employee relationships; risks relating to underestimating the cost of change; and risks of problems being exacerbated by inadequate planning and management.

## Appendix 1 International overview of police numbers and structures<sup>5</sup>

Country	Total officers	Total population	Population per officer <sup>6</sup>	Police structure
Canada <sup>7</sup>	64,134 (2007-8)	33,391,094	520	RCMP delivers federal policing; it is contracted to provide policing services to 20% of the population (70% of the land mass) across 8 provinces; Ontario and Quebec keep provincial forces.
Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland <sup>8</sup>	c. 11,000 police officials (and c. 3,000 staff)	5,500,000	500	There is a National Police which works alongside 12 police districts.
England and Wales <sup>9</sup>	147,085 FTE officers (and 1,956 staff and 14,251 special constables, both figures taken as headcount measures); 31 March 2009 figures.	55,156,875 <sup>10</sup>	375	There are 43 forces across England and Wales.
Finland <sup>11</sup>	7,800 (and 3100 staff)	5,311,800	681	Has moved from 90 to 24 police districts. "The national units of the police comprise the National Bureau of Investigation, the National Traffic Police and the Finnish Security Intelligence Service." <sup>12</sup>
Germany <sup>13</sup>	221,476 (2005-7)	82,352,000	372	Each of Germany's 16 federal states has its own police force and police law.
Netherlands <sup>14</sup>	53,000	16,000,000	302	The Dutch police have one national force for specialized tasks and 25 regional forces. The regional forces have a rather complex structure; this is a result of the distinction that is made in the Dutch Police Act 1993 between the 'authority' over the police, the 'administration' of the police and 'police policy.

<sup>5</sup> This table has been developed quickly and with limited resources; it is presented as a set of rough figures which may help give a sense of how different forces compare

<sup>6</sup> Rounded to 0 decimal places.

<sup>7</sup> Source of figures: HMICS survey.

<sup>8</sup> Source of figures: HMICS survey.

<sup>9</sup> Figures from <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1309.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Calculated from figures on <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1309.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Source of figures

<http://www.poliisi.fi/poliisi/home.nsf/pages/51AB1EDFFA353429C2256BB8003F8663?opendocument>

<sup>12</sup>

<http://www.poliisi.fi/poliisi/home.nsf/pages/51AB1EDFFA353429C2256BB8003F8663?opendocument>

<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Figures from Feltes and Wimber (2010).

Country	Total officers	Total population	Population per officer <sup>6</sup>	Police structure
New Zealand <sup>15</sup>	8,420 (and 2,958 other staff)	4,228,170	502	New Zealand Police is the national policing agency. It is centrally funded with a decentralised command: 12 districts, a national HQ and several service centres.
Northern Ireland <sup>16</sup>	7,582 (8875 including reserve officers and assuming that 1 part time reserve office is equivalent to 0.5 of full time). Additionally, 2,513.75 FTE police staff.	1,759,148	213 <sup>17</sup>	There is a single national policing body, funded by central government grant.
Norway <sup>18</sup>	8,344 (and 3,804 other staff)	4,900,000	556	There is a National Police Directorate with management responsibility. <sup>19</sup> Below this scale, Norway has moved from 54 to 27 police districts. <sup>20</sup>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>17,237 (Dec 2009); 7,494 staff</b>	<b>5,168,500</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>There are eight territorial police forces with some national functions delivered by the Scottish Police Services Authority.</b>
Sweden	18,321 (and 7,801 staff); Dec 2008 figures <sup>21</sup>	9,182,927 (2008 figure) <sup>22</sup>	501	Has moved from 118 to 21 police districts. Police activities therein are managed by the County Police Commissioner. National services include administration from the National Police Board, the Security Service, the National Bureau of Investigation and forensic science services. <sup>23</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Source of figures: HMICS survey.

<sup>15</sup> Source of figures: HMICS survey.

<sup>16</sup> Source of figures: HMICS survey.

<sup>17</sup> PSNI estimate; we have not investigated how this was calculated

<sup>18</sup> Source of figures: HMICS survey.

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.politi.no/vedlegg/rapport/Vedlegg\\_858.pdf](https://www.politi.no/vedlegg/rapport/Vedlegg_858.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Holmberg (2010)

<sup>21</sup>

[http://www.polisen.se/Global/www%20och%20Intrapolis/Informationsmaterial/01%20Polisen%20nationellt/Engelskt%20informationsmaterial/Number\\_of\\_employees\\_in\\_the\\_Swedish\\_Police.doc](http://www.polisen.se/Global/www%20och%20Intrapolis/Informationsmaterial/01%20Polisen%20nationellt/Engelskt%20informationsmaterial/Number_of_employees_in_the_Swedish_Police.doc)

<sup>22</sup>

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&language=en&pcode=tps00001&tableSelection=1&footnotes=yes&labeling=labels&plugin=1>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.polisen.se/en/Languages/The-Swedish-Police/Direction-/>

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