

Research briefing: levels of traffic police 2008-2012 in GB



Aims:

To determine the number of police officers that work in traffic enforcement in each police force in England, Wales and Scotland, how these levels have changed in the past five years and expectations for levels in the near future.

Methods:

Building on the results from its 2011 Freedom of Information requests to police, Brake contacted the 51 police forces¹ in Great Britain to ask them to supply numbers of traffic police officers in the force in March every year from 2008 to 2012. For some forces, Brake already held information of traffic police numbers for 2008-2011. In these cases we requested only the information not already held.

Results:

The results show that traffic policing continued to fall in England and Wales, with a drop of 14.29% over the past five years, including a drop of 4% in 2011-12 alone. In Scotland numbers of traffic police increased in the same five year period.

All but one of the 51 police forces across Great Britain replied to Brake's Freedom of Information request, but only 46 were able to provide complete responses. To ensure proportionality, incomplete responses were excluded from calculations of percentage change in traffic policing in the past five years. Incomplete responses are not shown below, and not included in country and regional calculations. A list of forces with incomplete responses can be found below.

Table one – overall reductions in traffic police numbers 2008 – 12

Traffic officer strength (FTE)	Traffic officer strength 2008	Traffic officer strength 2009	Traffic officer strength 2010	Traffic officer strength 2011	Traffic officer strength 2012	% change 2008-2012
England	5189.74	4913.18	4863.23	4694.74	4529.46	-12.41%
Wales	476.70	370.20	353.05	342.31	327.08	-31.39%
Scotland	769.97	761.82	760.00	593.27	798.13	3.66%
Great Britain	6436.41	6045.20	5976.28	5630.33	5654.67	-11.90%

¹ The number of police forces in Scotland has since shrunk to just one force covering the whole of Scotland.

Table two – reduction traffic police numbers by police force area 2008 – 12

Region	Police force area	Traffic officer strength - 2008	Traffic officer strength - 2009	Traffic officer strength - 2010	Traffic officer strength - 2011	Traffic officer strength - 2012	% change 2008-1012
North East and Cumbria		452.59	427.82	435.14	418.13	427.19	-5.61%
	Cleveland	118.00	115.00	112.00	110.00	97.00	-17.80%
	Durham	105.22	104.88	96.48	89.59	84.97	-19.25%
	Northumbria	142.62	122.94	144.66	137.79	169.72	19.00%
	Cumbria	86.75	85.00	82.00	80.75	75.50	-12.97%
North West		861.25	821.35	803.52	796.32	806.39	-6.37%
	Cheshire	91.00	83.00	81.00	104.00	108.60	19.34%
	Greater Manchester	337.50	314.60	309.72	295.52	302.00	-10.52%
	Lancashire	180.00	181.00	173.00	152.00	155.00	-13.89%
	Merseyside	151.75	166.75	163.80	175.80	166.00	9.39%
	Derbyshire	101.00	76.00	76.00	69.00	74.79	-25.95%
Yorkshire		612.29	616.58	633.18	597.39	470.43	-23.17%
	North Yorkshire	120.00	118.00	113.00	108.00	87.98	-26.68%
	South Yorkshire	209.16	201.71	205.16	193.39	146.88	-29.78%
	West Yorkshire	283.13	296.87	315.02	296.00	235.57	-16.80%
East Yorks + Lincolnshire		147.15	168.03	176.54	169.54	155.00	5.33%
	Humberstone	72.36	95.24	106.75	102.75	84.00	16.09%
	Lincolnshire	74.79	72.79	69.79	66.79	71.00	-5.07%
East Midlands		303.99	286.23	278.61	266.54	281.72	-7.33%
	Northamptonshire	36.54	46.81	45.81	43.81	47.00	28.63%
	Leicestershire	62.50	84.75	82.75	75.75	71.00	13.60%
	Hertfordshire	142.95	147.48	142.86	136.79	128.72	-9.95%
	Bedfordshire**	62.00	54.00	53.00	54.00	51.00	-17.74%
West Midlands		629.02	534.97	511.47	452.47	495.00	-21.31%
	Staffordshire	60.00	67.00	67.00	63.00	52.00	-13.33%
	Warwickshire	92.85	14.00	10.00	10.00	75.00	-19.22%
	West Mercia	125.30	113.00	97.00	85.00	83.00	-33.76%
	West Midlands	350.87	340.97	337.47	294.47	285.00	-18.77%
East Anglia		267.23	241.03	250.38	245.25	240.49	-10.01%
	Cambridgeshire	81.00	90.00	97.00	95.00	84.55	4.38%
	Norfolk	120.00	102.00	102.00	102.34	101.30	-15.58%
	Suffolk	66.23	49.03	51.38	47.91	54.64	-17.50%

London + South East		1100.95	1020.85	976.05	1008.80	956.90	-13.08%
	City of London	26.00	23.00	30.00	33.00	28.00	7.69%
	Metropolitan	712.00	655.00	658.00	678.00	653.00	-8.29%
	Hampshire	246.20	209.20	156.40	172.90	158.00	-35.82%
	Kent	116.75	133.65	131.65	124.90	117.90	0.99%
South		343.08	331.28	335.07	298.29	292.70	-14.68%
	Surrey	97.60	85.80	99.80	76.18	88.00	-9.84%
	Thames Valley	245.48	245.48	235.27	222.11	204.70	-16.61%
South West		472.19	465.04	463.27	442.02	403.64	-14.52%
	Devon & Cornwall	241.15	242.00	245.83	241.58	229.60	-4.79%
	Dorset	70.64	72.64	70.04	61.04	47.85	-32.26%
	Gloucestershire	67.40	67.40	65.40	62.40	59.86	-11.19%
	Wiltshire	93.00	83.00	82.00	77.00	66.33	-28.68%
Wales		476.70	370.20	353.05	342.31	327.08	-31.39%
	Dyfed-Powys	126.40	93.80	84.15	82.67	77.68	-38.54%
	Gwent	56.75	48.85	62.90	62.89	61.90	9.07%
	North Wales	60.00	62.00	58.00	56.00	52.00	-13.33%
	South Wales	233.55	165.55	148.00	140.75	135.50	-41.98%
Scotland		769.97	761.82	760.00	593.27	798.13	3.66%
	Central	45.00	45.00	45.00	45.00	44.00	-2.22%
	Dumfries & Galloway	43.00	43.00	42.00	42.00	41.00	-4.65%
	Fife	49.00	50.00	48.00	47.63	34.00	-30.61%
	Grampian	82.86	81.85	88.35	90.98	94.00	13.44%
	Lothian & Borders	122.00	127.00	129.00	128.00	145.00	18.85%
	Strathclyde	352.11	338.97	331.65	163.66	365.29	3.74%
	Tayside	76.00	76.00	76.00	76.00	74.84	-1.53%

*Incomplete results from five forces have been omitted from this table, and from regional calculations. Those forces are Avon and Somerset, Essex, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, and Northern.

** This data was corrected by Bedfordshire after this report was published to media.