



Police resource allocation and staff growth

Interim report:

Evaluation of the effort to increase the number of police employees by 10,000

**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) -
centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures**

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English summary of Brå report 2023:2

Summary

In June 2021, the Swedish Council for Crime Prevention (*Brå*) was commissioned by the government to evaluate the initiative to increase the number of police employees by 10,000. The first two sub-projects are *Police forensic operations* (2023:1) and the present project on *Police resource allocation and staff growth* (2023:2). This document can be seen as a "mid-term progress report" whose main purpose is to present a general follow up regarding how the Police Authority has allocated the increase in resources and to analyse how resource allocation and results so far have corresponded to what Brå perceives as the main goals of the initiative:

1. 10,000 more police employees, while maintaining the balance between civilian employees and police officers.
2. Increased diversity in the police.
3. Prioritisation of core activities.
4. Locally based police.
5. Police presence throughout the country, with a special focus on deprived areas.
6. Improved performance.

The questions the study aims to answer are:

1. How has the Police Authority organised and managed growth activities?
2. Is the outcome so far in line with the government's goals (as identified by Brå)?
3. What factors might explain any shortcomings in goal fulfilment?

In order to answer the questions posed by this study, Brå has used the operations statistics of the Police Authority, a document review, interviews with people working with growth efforts nationally and in the police regions, as well as a questionnaire and interviews with local police area Chief Inspectors (*LPO-chefer*).

Organisation and management of growth efforts by the police authority

Activities have been coordinated and subsequently led by a National Growth Coordinator, in close cooperation with national administrative Departments with responsibilities for growth efforts. The management of growth activities has gradually tightened, and has involved decision-makers in the national management team and in the police regions, while previously being managed from the regional offices. In 2021, the National Coordinator was given the additional task of managing police growth, regional target metrics were developed, a national coordination forum was established, which included

the deputy regional police Chief Commissioners and the HR Directors in each region, and growth is monitored more frequently. Attracting people to police training has been a key element of growth efforts and a number of measures have been taken to increase the number of applicants and students admitted.

The assessment by police regions of the support they have received from the National Coordinator varies, as does the assessment of the support received from administrative support units. However, it is clear that the growth efforts have spurred the move towards closer cooperation within the Authority.

When comparing the Police Authority's policy documents with the Government's main goals a number of priority areas can be identified. Although policies do not conflict with the government's intentions, as a whole, the plan is so much broader that it is difficult to discern clear priorities. The various elements of the growth efforts are described in a number of different plans, based on the growth plan developed in 2019 (*Plan för tillväxt*). The plan is very extensive and the large number of policy documents with their different versions makes it difficult to summarise and track how the work has changed over time.

The Police Authority has increasingly transferred Authority-wide costs to national departments, with the result that police regions' costs are almost entirely staff-related (90%). From 2021, there has been a reallocation from police regions to national departments, partly in order to contain the growth of civilian staff. The Authority has also implemented a new model of budget allocation within the Authority, which has particularly benefited two police regions (Bergslagen and Öst).

Goal fulfilment

Goal 1 - 10,000 more police employees while maintaining the balance between civilian employees and police officers

At the start of the initiative (December 2015), the number of employees at the Police Authority was around 28,000, with 70% being police officers. In December 2022, the number of employees had risen to around 34,900, which is just over 3,000 below the goal. Of those recruited so far, more than 2,000 are police officers and around 4,500 are civilian employees. This means that the goal of 10,000 more police employees should be reached without major problems, but not if the goal of around 70% police officers is also taken into account.

The results of staff growth to date show that the Authority's 2018 recruitment forecast regarding police officers was unrealistic and that because of a shortage of police officers, it recruited a larger number of civilians than

planned, up to and including 2020. To reach the percentage goal, more than 4,000 additional police officers would be needed, while the number of civilian employees would have to decrease by about 1,000.

Many of those interviewed by Brå expressed strong criticism of the fact that the goal of a certain percentage of police officers had become a rule because this goal was not based on an analysis of operations. It is seen as detrimental to the organisation and the police regions believe that they should be left to decide for themselves what is an appropriate distribution, based on their different needs.

Goal 2 - Increased diversity in the police

The percentage of women among police officers as well as among managers has increased slightly within the Authority. Among applicants for police training, the percentage of women has risen to almost half (45%). The percentage of persons with a foreign background has increased marginally since 2017, and is particularly low amongst police officers. People with a foreign background apply for police training at the same rate as the rest of the population, but fewer pass the examination. The fact that people with a foreign background are now more likely to go on to higher education than people with a Swedish background shows that the right target group is not being reached.

Goal 3 – Prioritisation of core activities

Within the core activities, the Government has expressed the expectation that crime prevention, investigation, and border police work should be prioritised. These core activities have also seen the largest increase in staff numbers. Other parts of the core operations, and in particular those relating to accessibility and service to citizens, have not seen the same growth.

In terms of percentages, however, administrative support has increased the most, which goes against the government's intention to primarily strengthen core activities.

Goal 4 – Locally based police

The goal of strengthening the local police area level in particular has not been achieved. The national departments have displayed greater growth than the police regions. Within the police regions, it is mainly the police district level that has increased. The growth of the police districts is due partly to the priority given to serious organised crime and crimes against particularly vulnerable victims, and partly to the fact that the police authority wanted to strengthen the police districts so that they can handle their own crime investigations and not have to draw resources from the local police areas.

Many local police area Chief Inspectors feel that their activities are de-prioritised and that their staff are often redeployed to other parts of the

Authority. Internal mobility, with staff changing jobs within the Authority, also puts a strain on local police areas.

Goal 5 - Police presence throughout the country, with a focus on deprived areas

The police regions that have increased the most are those that had the lowest number of employees per inhabitant in 2017, and the Stockholm police region, which had the most employees per inhabitant has increased the least. The trend is therefore one of homogeneity. At the same time, the number of crimes per employee has increased in the Stockholm region, both in absolute terms and in relation to the other regions. The Stockholm police region has also had the lowest growth of police officers. The main reason for this is high internal mobility away from the region to other police regions and to national departments. In addition to the Stockholm police region, police region Nord stands out. They have no vulnerable areas and the lowest number of reported crimes per employee. The challenge there is instead the long distances.

Local police areas with deprived areas have been a clear priority in the growth efforts. Otherwise, growth is evenly distributed between urban and rural areas. However, local police areas with a high proportion of inhabitants living in deprived areas have not grown more than local police areas with a lower proportion of inhabitants living in deprived areas. Furthermore, the most sparsely populated local police areas have experienced less police growth than the others.

Goal 6 - Improved performance

Local area police patrolling has sufficient capacity to carry out its mission. For example, there has been a gradual reduction in response time that can probably be linked to growth. Both patrolling and crime prevention have been strengthened, according to the local police area chiefs, but the growth in staff has so far not been sufficient to prioritise crime prevention activities. However, Chief Inspectors see the increase in staff as an opportunity to strengthen and prioritise crime prevention.

The number of people working in crime investigations has increased, but this has not had an impact on the proportion of cases reported to prosecutors, despite the fact that the inflow has remained constant. Previous audits have found weaknesses in the investigation process which may prevent employee growth from having the desired effect. Other factors may include an increase in the proportion of pre-trial restricted cases (these are included among closed cases), the fact that serious crime is a drain on resources, and the fact that many staff are new and lack relevant training. Brå will revisit this issue in the next sub-project.

After initial problems in managing its two tasks - service and investigation - call waiting times to police contact centres decreased significantly between 2018 and 2021, even in police regions with staff reductions. In the latter half of 2021, and particularly in 2022, call waiting times have again risen sharply. A contributing factor may be a large staff reduction in 2022.

Brå's assessment

It is Brå's assessment that the Police Authority will be able to reach the goal of 10,000 more police employees, but not the goal of around 70 per cent police officers. Our assessment is that the Authority has taken those measures that have been available in an effort to meet the target for the number of police officers, given the current system of basic police training.

In terms of resource allocation, the Police Authority has followed the Government's priorities in terms of specific core operational areas, with local policing areas with deprived areas receiving a greater share of staff growth. The Stockholm police region is clearly behind with very low growth and has so far been given lower priority in budget allocation.

However, the Authority has not been able to streamline administrative support during the period of growth, and non-prioritised core activities have grown very little, or even declined. The latter can be linked to the ambition to hold back on the number of civilian staff.

The Police Authority has not succeeded in strengthening the local level, and Brå does not perceive that there has been a strong prioritisation of growth efforts towards the local level. Internal mobility means that if the local level is not given special priority, there will be a loss of experienced staff over time.

The analysis of operational results shows that there is no clear positive impact of staff growth so far, with the exception of local level police patrolling and crime prevention (BF/IGV). The increase in staff allows for a structured and long-term focus on crime prevention, but this depends on a clear prioritisation of the area.

Summary table.

| Goal | Goal fulfillment | Recommendation |
|--|------------------|--|
| 1. 10 000 more police employees | ✓ | |
| ...of which a certain number/percentage of police officers | X | Prioritise operational benefits over numerical targets |
| 2. Increased diversity | | |
| ...of which women | ✓ | |
| ...of which foreign background | X | Specific measures required |
| 3. Prioritising core activities | X | Strengthen the ambition to streamline administrative support |
| ...of which prioritised operational units | ✓ | |
| 4. Locally based police | X | Stronger prioritisation of resources towards the local level is needed |
| 5. Police presence throughout the country | (✓) | The situation in Stockholm requires strong measures |
| ...including a focus on deprived areas | ✓ | |
| 6. Improved performance | | Improve monitoring metrics |
| ...of which BF/IGV | ✓ | Prioritise crime prevention |
| ...of which crime investigations | X | |
| ...of which PKC | X | Re-recruit when necessary |

BRÅ's recommendations

- Prioritise operational benefits over quantitative targets

There is a need for more police officers if the vision of a visible and community-based police force is to become a reality. However, the Authority needs reasonable and long-term plans for growth. Inflexible quantitative targets risk creating the wrong incentives and shifting focus away from operational content, methodological development and improved efficiency.

The focus on maintaining a certain percentage of police officers has been detrimental to the organisation, including the failure of high turnover operations to recruit replacements, and the redeployment of police staff to replace civilians. Instead, the allocation should be guided by what provides the most operational benefit.

- Strengthen the local level and balance internal mobility

In order to achieve the goal of a strong local presence, the Police Authority needs to prioritise police regions over national departments, and the police regions in turn need to direct resources to the local police area level.

To counteract internal upward mobility, the Authority needs to create incentives for staff to remain at lower organisational levels. The police authority's work with "career and development paths" (KUV) can be a part of this.

- The situation in the Stockholm police region requires strong measures

The fact that the Stockholm police region is so understaffed risks having serious consequences for the overall capacity of the police force.

Relocating larger parts of the National Operations Department (Noa) to other police regions would help to reduce the outflow from the region. Including deprived areas in the budget allocation model would benefit particularly overloaded police regions in the long term. A more flexible model for determining salaries with hard-to-recruit areas being allowed to compete by offering higher salaries would help both Stockholm and sparsely populated areas. However, the latter is a matter for the social parties.

- Improving and developing operational statistics

In the course of the project, Brå has become aware that it is not possible to follow the flow of redeployments shorter than three months. Therefore, we cannot know for sure what the actual net staffing is for different units. This means that the statistics presented risk being misleading.

Brå would like to emphasise the need for a follow-up measure that takes into account the composition of the reported offences, the penal value of the crimes, and the use of pre-trial investigation restrictions. In addition, there is a great need for measures to monitor and follow up crime prevention activities.