# Police Scotland – The organisation of the police in Scotland – Transcript

**Sir Stephen House**: I'm Stephen House, Chief Constable, Police Scotland.

***Why was Police Scotland established?***

**Sir Stephen House**: We were created from eight regional police forces that were created and have been in place for about 35 years. The Parliament's view was, after quite a lot of public debate, that there should be an amalgamation of the eight regional police forces into one national police service, and that is Police Scotland.

***How is Police Scotland organised?***

**Sir Stephen House**: Police Scotland is effectively a very local service and we want it to be regarded as a local service but it is organised at a national level with one chief constable, one headquarters, and one senior command team. And that's important for consistency across the country but also, quite frankly, so that we are not spending a lot of money on too many senior officers. So we've gone from 8 chief constables down to just myself, and I have a team of deputies and assistant chief constables who work with me.

At the very local level though, which is the most important aspect and it's what the public see, we're organised across the whole of the country in 14 different territorial divisions. So, as an example of that, there is a division that covers the whole of Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire. The city of Edinburgh is policed by a single police division and these police divisions, and there are 14 of them around the country, each one has a divisional commander and that's the Chief Superintendent who is a very senior officer who is in charge of the policing in that local area.

In addition to that, we also have units that cover some specialist areas. So, for example, we have very experienced and well-trained detectives who work at a national level investigating the most serious crime, homicide, but also deal with terrorist issues. So the basic way to remember it is, there is 14 divisions across the country that provide the local policing that people see on the streets, but there are also specialist units that support those officers as well.

***Who holds Police Scotland to account?***

**Sir Stephen House**: It's important to realise, I think, that Police Scotland is not its own boss. We have significant amounts of accountability. So I'm accountable directly to the Scottish Police Authority.

People often, I think, look and say "Well, the police are unaccountable". Actually from where I sit and where most police officers sit, it feels very, very accountable and I haven't even mentioned the media who, you won't read a newspaper in Scotland that doesn't have some story about Police Scotland in it on a daily basis. We hope they're positive stories in the main about how we're doing a good job, keeping people safe in Scotland, but they are not always positive stories.

But the media hold us to account as well and it's quite right that they should do.

[End of transcript]