

POLICE MERGERS INTERIM SUMMARY (PROVISIONAL)

Populus interviewed a random sample of 4,569 adults aged 18+ by telephone between April 26th & May 18th 2006. Interviews were conducted across the country in those areas affected by proposed police mergers. The results have been weighted to be representative of adults living in those areas.

The government plans to merge most police forces in England and Wales, creating fewer, bigger forces, each covering a much bigger area. Supporters argue that the new, larger forces will be able to fight organised crime more effectively. Opponents say that this could be achieved by closer co-operation between local forces, and that the disappearance of local forces risks less attention being paid to local crime. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view?										
Base: All respondents in a police merger area										
	Total	North East	Yorks & Humb	East Mids	Eastern	South East	South West	Wales	West Mids	North West
	4569	359	679	516	578	424	537	402	552	522
Aware of plans & support them	20%	21%	19%	18%	21%	20%	18%	23%	22%	20%
Aware of plans & oppose them	43%	40%	41%	48%	45%	42%	45%	46%	42%	41%
Unaware of plans but support them	16%	18%	18%	17%	14%	15%	16%	13%	18%	19%
Unaware of plans but oppose them	15%	16%	17%	12%	14%	17%	15%	12%	14%	16%
None of the above	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Don't know	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	6%	4%	4%	3%	3%
AWARE	63%	61%	60%	66%	66%	62%	63%	69%	64%	61%
UNAWARE	31%	34%	35%	29%	28%	32%	31%	25%	32%	35%
SUPPORT	36%	39%	37%	35%	35%	35%	34%	36%	40%	39%
OPPOSE	58%	56%	58%	60%	59%	59%	60%	58%	56%	57%
NET OPPOSE	23%	16%	22%	25%	24%	25%	26%	27%	16%	18%

- Overall, across those areas affected by the proposed police mergers 58% oppose them and 36% support them.
- Among those who are aware of the merger plans in their area, opinion is more than 2 to 1 against (43% opposed; 20% support).

- Among those who are unaware of the merger plans in their area, opinion is evenly divided (16% support the idea of merger; 15% oppose it)
- People are three times as likely to oppose police mergers if they know they are happening in their area (15% unaware and opposed; 43% aware and opposed)
- In all about two thirds of people affected by the mergers say they are aware of the plans (63%), twice as many as the one third (31%) who say they are not aware of them.
- In no affected region do more than two-fifths of people support the merger plans (West Midlands 40%) and in the South West as few as a third do (34%).
- Opposition is greatest in the South West and East Midlands (60%), though in no affected area is opposition less than 56% in the West Midlands and the North East (56%)