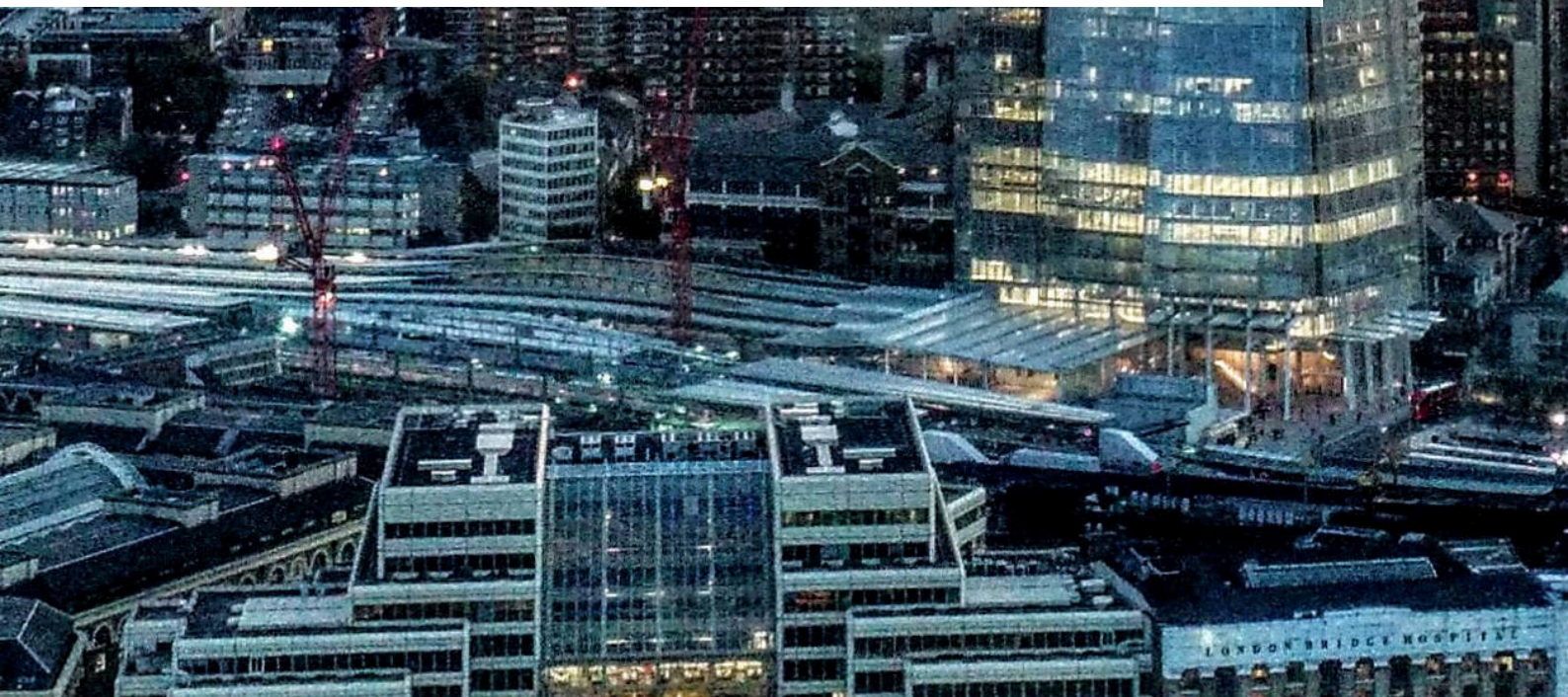


# Benchmarking police numbers in London against other global cities

Matt Ashby

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# Executive summary

This report compares the number of police officers and staff per 10,000 residents in London to the number of officers and staff in 13 other *global cities* – large cities in developed countries around the world – to better understand the resources available to police in London.

London is a global city: the largest city in Europe and a primary hub of global trade and culture. London's size and international nature create policing challenges not seen elsewhere in the UK.

This report compares the number of officers per in London to rates in the three other largest police-force areas in England and Wales (Greater Manchester, West Midlands and West Yorkshire<sup>1</sup>) and to 10 other global cities:

**Europe:** Barcelona, Madrid and Paris.

**North America:** Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Toronto

**Asia/Oceania:** Hong Kong, Singapore and Tokyo.

## Trends in officer/staff numbers in London

As of 2022 there were more police officers in London than at previous time in the city's history. However, after accounting for population change, the number of officers per 10,000 residents is slightly below the average for the past 20 years. While the number of police officers per capita in London is rising, as of 2022 it remains 11% below 2010 levels. The number of police staff in London has fallen more substantially since 2010, with the number of police staff per 10,000 residents in 2022 being 48% below the equivalent number in 2010 (see page 3).

## Comparing London to other global cities

Comparing London to other global cities is valuable because those cities often face many of the same policing challenges that in the UK are unique to London. For example, London, Hong Kong, New York City, Paris and Tokyo all have more than 10-million overnight business and tourist visitors per year, as well as having day-time populations that are swelled by large numbers of commuters from outside the city boundary. Nevertheless, comparing police numbers across cities is difficult because the responsibilities of police agencies vary substantially between cities (see page 4).

The number of police officers per 10,000 residents in London is broadly comparable with officer numbers in other global cities. Of the international cities included in this report, London has fewer officers per capita than in Chicago, Madrid, Paris or New York, but more than in Barcelona, Los Angeles, Singapore, Tokyo or Toronto (see page 5).

Comparing numbers of police staff (i.e. paid police employees who are not police officers) internationally is complicated by the substantially different responsibilities of staff between countries. Within the UK, the number of police staff per capita in London is notably below that in other large cities, despite large numbers of police staff in London working on national policing tasks. This reflects large cuts to police-staff numbers in London since 2010, which were not seen in other large UK cities (see page 6).

<sup>1</sup>These areas were included because they have been identified by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services as the 'most similar forces' to the Metropolitan Police Service.

# Trends in police numbers in London

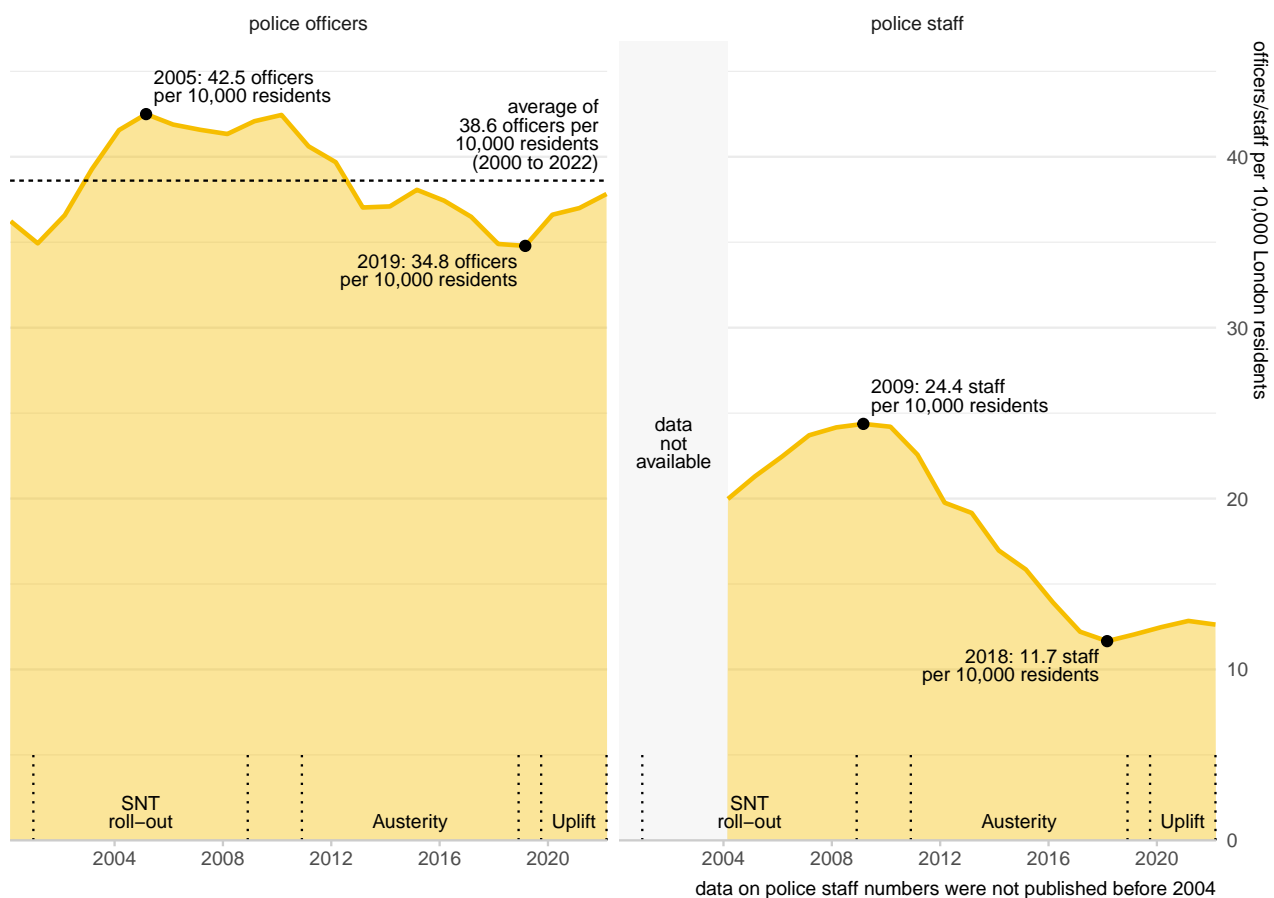
In 2022 there were 34,900 police officers and 10,500 police staff in London. Adjusting for changes in population, that is a drop of 11% officers and 48% staff relative to 2010.

As of 31 March 2022, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and City of London Police (CoLP) had a combined total of 34,900 full-time-equivalent police officers, or 37.5 officers per 10,000 residents. This includes all regular police officers, including those working against national threats such as MPS officers working on counter terrorism and CoLP officers working on countering fraud.

The *number* of police officers in 2022 is the largest in the history of policing in London, but the number of officers adjusted for population is slightly below the long-term average of 38.6 officers per 10,000 residents since 2000<sup>2</sup>. For

example, the number of officers per 10,000 residents in 2022 remained 11% below the number in 2010.

The drop in police-staff numbers over the past decade has been proportionally much greater, with staff numbers (including PCSOs and designated officers) in 2022 being 48% below that in 2010. There has also been a much smaller recovery in the number of police staff in the past five years. This means that while in 2010 there 5.7 police staff in London for every 10 police officers, in 2022 there are only 3.3 staff for every 10 officers.



<sup>2</sup>Comparison with officer numbers before 2000 is not possible because of changes in the boundaries of the Metropolitan Police Area.



# Comparing officer/staff numbers across global cities

Comparing police numbers between global cities is complicated for several reasons. There are typically more police officers in urban areas, meaning that cities with administrative boundaries that cover suburban or even outlying rural areas will have lower numbers of police officers per capita than cities with administrative boundaries that only cover an urban core.

There are also substantial differences between the responsibilities given to the police in different countries and cities. In Madrid, the police are responsible for checking the passports of people arriving on flights at the main airport, while in Singapore the police provide the coast guard service. Within countries, there is variation in which responsibilities are carried out by local

police forces rather than national agencies. For example, in Tokyo primary responsibility for both cyber crime and counter terrorism lies with the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, while in New York City primary responsibility for both lies with national agencies. These differences in responsibility mean that there could be substantial variations in the number of police officers even in two cities with the same population.

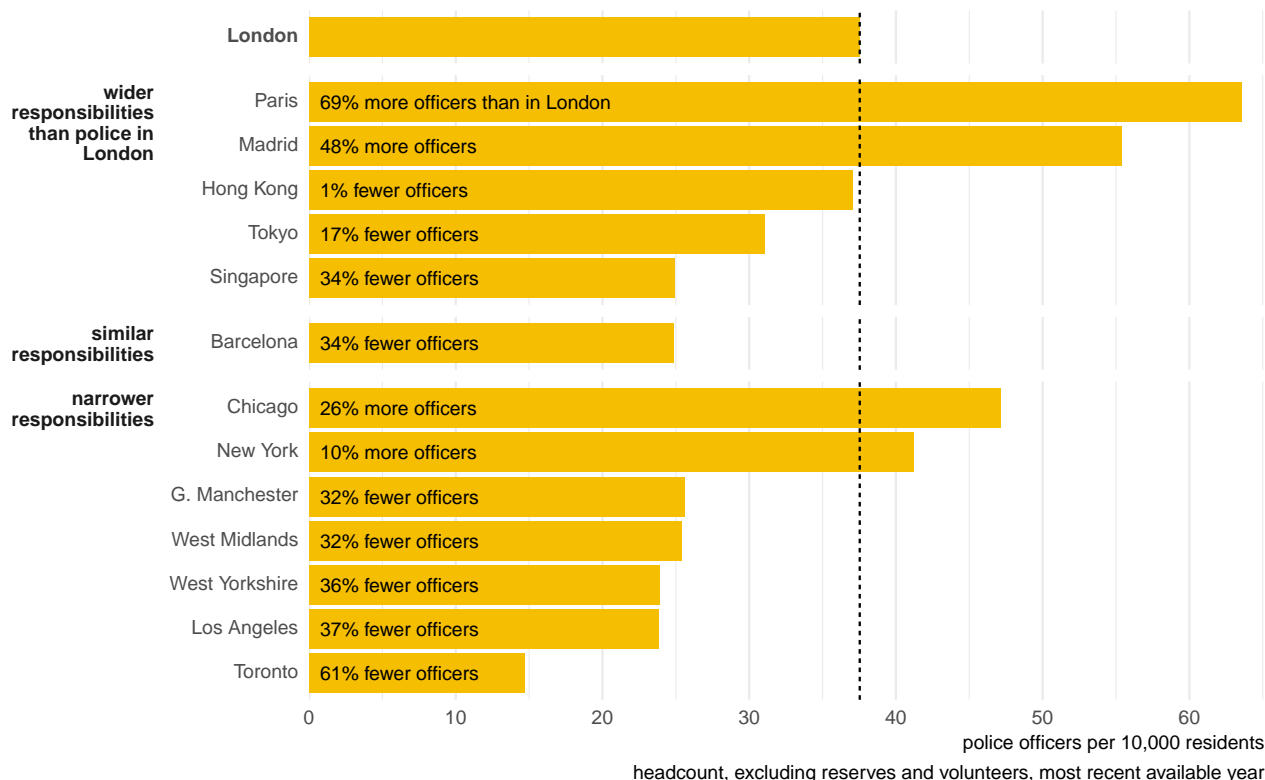
The overall breadth of responsibility on policing in London is moderate in comparison to other global cities. In the charts below, cities are categorised as having either *wider* police responsibilities than in London, *similar* responsibilities or *narrower* responsibilities<sup>3</sup>.

Table 1: Responsibilities of police forces in different global cities

| city  | <i>primary responsibilities include ...</i> |             |                       |                  |                  |                  |           |
|---|---|-------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|
|   | coast guard                                 | cyber crime | diplomatic protection | intl. org. crime | passport control | railway policing | terrorism |
| London  | –   | joint       | yes                   | joint            | –                | –                | yes       |
| <i>forces with wider responsibilities than police in London</i> |   |             |                       |                  |                  |                  |           |
| Hong Kong   | yes   | yes         | yes                   | yes              | –                | yes              | yes       |
| Madrid  | –   | yes         | yes                   | joint            | yes              | yes              | yes       |
| Paris   | –   | yes         | yes                   | yes              | –                | yes              | yes       |
| Singapore   | yes   | yes         | yes                   | yes              | –                | yes              | yes       |
| Tokyo   | –   | yes         | yes                   | yes              | –                | yes              | yes       |
| <i>forces with similar responsibilities</i>                     |   |             |                       |                  |                  |                  |           |
| Barcelona   | –   | yes         | –                     | joint            | yes              | yes              | yes       |
| <i>forces with narrower responsibilities</i>                    |   |             |                       |                  |                  |                  |           |
| Chicago   | –   | –           | –                     | –                | –                | joint            | –         |
| G. Manchester   | –   | –           | –                     | –                | –                | –                | –         |
| Los Angeles   | –   | –           | –                     | –                | –                | yes              | –         |
| New York  | –   | –           | yes                   | –                | –                | joint            | –         |
| Toronto   | –   | joint       | –                     | –                | –                | joint            | joint     |
| West Midlands   | –   | –           | –                     | –                | –                | –                | –         |
| West Yorkshire  | –   | –           | –                     | –                | –                | –                | –         |

<sup>3</sup>The nature of policing means that police agencies may have incidental involvement in some areas that do not fall within their areas of primary responsibility, such as when MPS officers respond to incidents at railway stations.

# Police officers



There are 38 officers per 10,000 residents in London, broadly comparable with officer numbers in other global cities.

There are 34,900 police officers in London<sup>4</sup>, or 38 officers per 10,000 residents.

London has around 50% more officers per capita than other large cities in the UK. This reflects the national responsibilities of the MPS and CoLP (such as royalty and diplomatic protection), the status of London as a policing region (meaning officer numbers include regional units for countering organised crime and terrorism) and the additional responsibilities of policing a capital city (such as national protests).

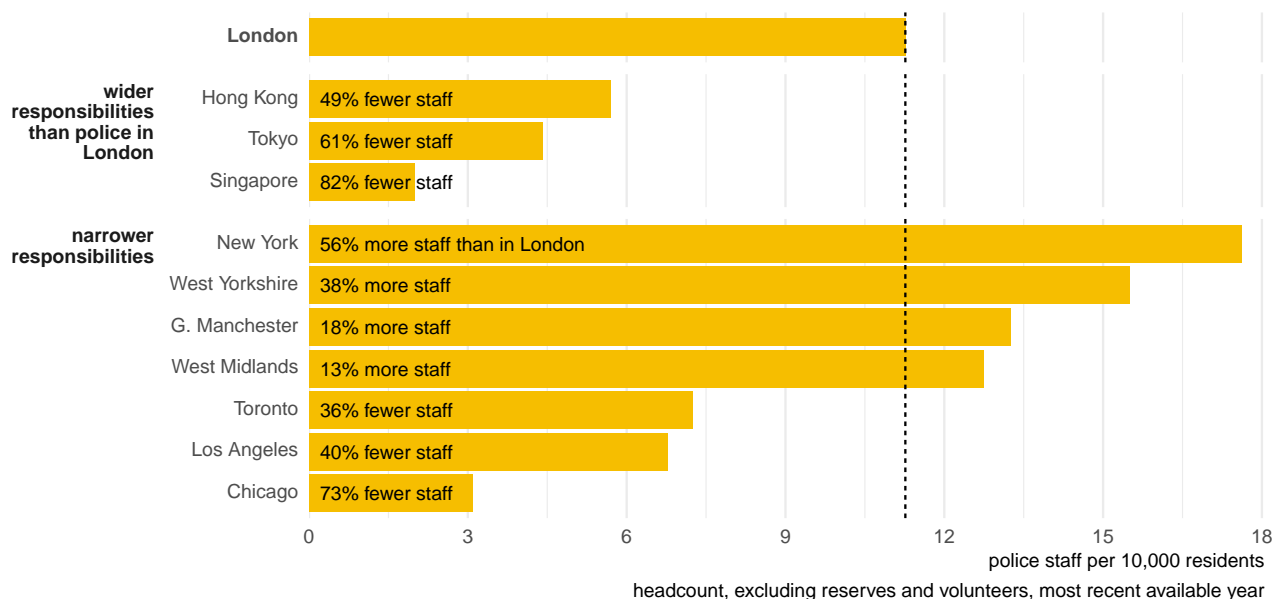
London has a moderate number of police officers compared to other global cities internationally, but there is substantial variation between cities once breadth of responsibilities are taken into account. Among cities where police have wider responsibilities than in London, there are more

police per capita in Paris and Madrid than in London (despite broadly similar levels of serious crime) – Paris has 69% more officers per capita than London. Conversely, London has more officers per capita than in Asian cities such as Singapore, despite the Singapore Police Force having substantially wider responsibilities. This may be explained by global cities in Asia typically having much lower levels of police-recorded crime than global cities in Europe.

The number of police officers per capita in London is lower than in Chicago or New York City, despite police in London having responsibility for activities such as counter-terror investigation that are primarily undertaken by federal agencies in North America. Conversely, London has many more officers per capita than in Los Angeles or Toronto.

<sup>4</sup>Excluding officers from British Transport Police and Ministry of Defence Police based in London.

# Police staff



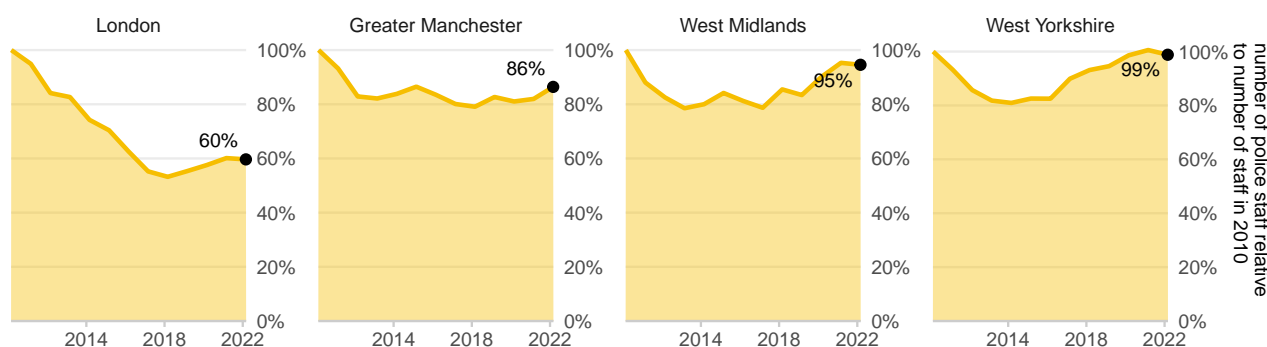
London has 11 police staff per 10,000 residents. International comparisons of police-staff numbers are difficult to make, but the number of police staff in London is substantially below that in other large UK cities.

There is substantial variation between global cities in the number of police staff, i.e. paid police employees who are not police officers. This reflects differing approaches to which roles are done by police officers and which by other employees. Forces in England and Wales typically use police staff for a wider range of duties than in other countries, with many countries deploying officers in roles that would be done largely by police staff in England and Wales. For example, Toronto Police crime-scene examiners are officers rather than police staff.

Despite this, some agencies employ large numbers of police staff for roles that are outside the scope of police responsibilities in London. The New York City Police Department, for

example, employs around 5,000 school safety agents to patrol inside schools, as well as 4,000 traffic enforcement agents and 2,000 part-time school crossing guards.

These differences in the use of police staff across countries makes international comparisons difficult. Compared to police in other large UK cities, however, the number of police staff in London is relatively low. West Yorkshire, for example, has 38% more police staff per capita than in London, despite over 1,300 police staff being hosted by London forces while working on national policing tasks. This reflects the large drop in police-staff numbers in London relative to other large UK forces since 2010 (see chart, below).



# Technical details

## Choice of cities included in this report

Cities were included in this report if they: (a) are in countries that are highly developed according to the 2021 UN Human Development Index (i.e. a HDI score of 0.90 or more), (b) have a population of greater than 2.5 million people (or 5 million people for cities in Asia), and (c) publish statistics on the number of police officers at city level. Hong Kong was included because the UN issues an HDI score for Hong Kong (0.952) separately from the rest of China (0.768). *If a city meets these criteria but is not included in this report, that is likely to be because no officer numbers are available for that city.*

## Officers within specialist agencies

The police numbers shown in this report typically exclude officers in specialist police agencies. This includes, for example, local specialist agencies such as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department, as well as national specialist agencies such as the Federal Protective Service. These agencies typically do

not produce officer numbers broken down by city, so their officers could not be integrated into the officer counts used in this report. However, the number of officers in these agencies is usually small (at least when it comes to officers based in a particular city), so it is not likely that this will have had a substantial effect on the overall results.

## Credits

The data for this project was obtained from the police agencies listed below. The cover image is by Fred Moon on Unsplash.com, and is available at <https://unsplash.com/photos/fk50kc-DzSg>

## More details

The analysis for this report was produced using the R statistical programming language (version 4.2.2) and is fully reproducible. The R code needed to reproduce the analysis or charts in this report is available online at <https://github.com/mpjashby/global-cities-crime-benchmarking>

Table 2: Police agencies included in this report

| city               | police agencies included                              | latest available data |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Barcelona          | Autonomous Police, Civil Guard, National Police Corps | 2021                  |
| Chicago            | Chicago Police Dept                                   | 2020                  |
| Greater Manchester | Greater Manchester Police                             | 2022                  |
| Hong Kong          | Hong Kong Police Force                                | 2021                  |
| London             | City of London Police, Metropolitan Police Service    | 2022                  |
| Los Angeles        | Los Angeles Police Dept                               | 2021                  |
| Madrid             | Civil Guard, National Police Corps                    | 2020                  |
| New York           | New York City Police Dept                             | 2021                  |
| Paris              | National Gendarmerie, National Police                 | 2019                  |
| Singapore          | Singapore Police Force                                | 2020                  |
| Tokyo              | Tokyo Metropolitan Police Dept                        | 2020                  |
| Toronto            | Toronto Police Service                                | 2021                  |
| West Midlands      | West Midlands Police                                  | 2022                  |
| West Yorkshire     | West Yorkshire Police                                 | 2022                  |