

The Herald

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Points of View

An issue of trust

Tom Gordon's report that senior Scottish police officers want the power to store the DNA and fingerprints of people who have been arrested but are innocent of any crime horrifies me (June 21).

Are these the very same police officers who for eight years have defended the Scottish Criminal Records Office in the face of damning criticism from across the world that their fingerprint identifications in the Shirley McKie case are wrong?

Is the SCRO the organisation that totally refuses to admit its mistakes no matter the cost in human suffering to the innocents traumatised by its errors?

If we cannot trust the organisation that will be responsible for taking and storing these fingerprints then the proposals are flawed from the outset and represent a very real danger to our civil liberties.

Fortunately, the justice minister, Cathy Jamieson, has intimated a three-month consultation on the proposal and I look forward to contributing to that debate.

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<http://www.theherald.co.uk/features/41730.html> (page 4)

THE SCOTSMAN

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Data storage danger

On the surface, the desire of senior Scottish police officers to store the DNA and fingerprints of people who have been arrested but are innocent of any crime (your report, 21 June) has much to commend it.

Unfortunately, in Scotland the organisation that will be responsible for the collection and storage of fingerprints will be the Scottish Criminal Records Office. This is the organisation that has been condemned across the world for its failure to admit its mistakes in the case of Shirley McKie, the policewoman accused of perjury after a fingerprint from a crime scene was wrongly identified as hers.

The senior police officers who make the proposals are those who, for eight years, have supported the SCRO in the face of this mounting criticism.

If we cannot guarantee honesty, openness and probity from the organisation responsible for retaining fingerprints, then these proposals represent a real threat to our civil liberties.

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<http://thescotsman.scotsman.com/letters.cfm?id=689542005>