

Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel – Annual Report - September 2018 to August 2019

The Scrutiny Panel (the Panel) has completed its second year of:

- enhancing the public's confidence in the work of the Police
- acting as a 'critical friend' to the Police
- offering feedback on the use of police powers, in particular the use of force.

The focus of the year was:

- unconscious bias
- quality of data
- interaction/collaboration with other PCC panels
- helping the Police to cope when confronted by problems arising from mental health issues.

The 16 members of the Panel, meeting quarterly over the last twelve months, have reviewed Body Worn Video (BWV) and incident records of 124 cases. These 'dip sampled' cases involved the use of Taser, Stop and Search and the use of Spit & Bite Guards.

Our reviews show the professionalism of Front Line Police Officers working in exacting circumstances, where their health and welfare were often at risk. Our feedback to Avon and Somerset Constabulary includes both commendations and learning points.

As a 'critical friend', we have suggested areas where improvements might be achieved, including:

- avoiding the misidentification of individuals
- monitoring the use of BWV camera – whether or not it is being switched on
- the benefit of de-escalation in 'high octane' situations
- using BWV as the default option, when deploying a Taser.

All the quarterly reports may be read [here](#).

In November 2018, the Panel reviewed a 2017 Taser case and our report, published in July 2019, can be read [here](#). We are very pleased that the Constabulary has accepted all our recommendations. Their response may be read [here](#).

The Constabulary has already announced:

- The intention to equip Front Line Police Officers with mobile fingerprint scanners to try to prevent innocent people being confused with suspects.
- De-escalation training for all Front Line Police Officers.

We look forward to continuing positive engagement in the coming year.

Panel Chair Adeela Shafi

Report date: 02/09/2019