

SCRUTINY OF POLICE POWERS PANEL
QUARTERLY MEETING 10TH MARCH 2020

The meeting was cancelled because of coronavirus. However, an online discussion meant that some agenda items could still be considered by members of the Scrutiny Panel (SP).

1 January 2017 TASER Incident

The SP made 5 recommendations on organisational learning relating to the above, all of which were accepted by Avon and Somerset Constabulary (A&S) in a letter of 12/07/2019. Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) Sarah Crew has provided a progress report in a paper dated 02/03/2020. Both letter and report are attached at Appendix 1a and 1b.

2 De-escalation Training

This new training programme for all front line officers commenced in November 2019. Panel members have attended the training and provided feedback. This has been passed to the training team for consideration, when the content of the course is reviewed.

3 Equality analysis re Increase in the number of Taser trained officers

An exchange between the SP and A&S has established that this is a work in progress.

4 Stop and Search Report October – December 2019

This quarterly bulletin report, together with the SP's report of the 31/01/2020 Internal Scrutiny Panel (ISP) meeting, is attached at Appendix 2a and 2b. As you will see:

- The disproportionality rate shows that a Black person is 43.9 times more likely to be subject to Stop and Search (S&S) in Somerset than a White person is. Forcewide, the figure is 8.99 times.
- Each officer not using their BWV more than once has been written to by Ch.Supt. Richard Corrigan.
- Plain clothes officers are reminded to use their BWV during a search.
- Black people are five times more likely than white to have force used against them.

5 Selection of BWV cases for Scrutiny at the 10/03/2020

The following cases were selected:

- All S&S of children under 10 years of age (also any under 16s).
- All S&S and use of force in Minehead, where of the 11 S&S's 2 were of black people, bearing in mind that there are 13 black people living in Minehead.
- All S&S of Black people, with particular reference to the grounds for the search
- The grounds for S&S are to be compared between Bristol Central/East and Somerset West area.
- The use of Taser/Use of Force (UoF) in Somerset East and Somerset West re Black people.

As explained above, no reviews have yet taken place.

6 Section 60 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994

A Section 60 authorisation was made on 15/02/2020. The SP was provided with a briefing note, explaining the reason for this authorisation.

7 HMICFRS 'PEEL' Report February 2020

This report considers A & S effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy during 2018/19. The SP congratulates A&S on its 'Excellent performance'. The HM Inspectors conclusion is to be found at Appendix 3.

The report has detailed comments on disproportionality. UoF and S&S. It is of note that as a consequence of the Inspector's comments, A& S set up an internal S&S/UoF Scrutiny Panel. Its first meeting was on 21/10/2019, chaired by Ch. Super Richard Corrigan. The SP is represented at these meetings and we are pleased to have a constructive and supportive relationship, which improves our respective scrutiny.

The 'PEEL' Report comments specifically on our Scrutiny Panel as follows:

"The constabulary has a transparent approach to the external scrutiny of stop and search and use of force. It collaborates with the OPCC on its regular Scrutiny of Police Powers panel. This well-attended forum has a diverse membership, offering a broad range of views. A comprehensive pack is given in advance of each meeting. This includes documents and data on use of force and statistics on the use of body worn video. At the meetings, the panel considers relevant issues within a varied agenda.

"For example, members of the panel view randomly selected incidents that have been recorded on body worn video. They then split into groups to consider them and report any concerns. An independent chair and vice-chair channel the exchanges of views, which are sometimes robust but respectful. They share learning with relevant officers, supervisors and the organisational learning team. Chief Officers and thematic leads attend the meetings. Their presence reinforces the importance of the meetings. The well-informed panel members have received training and have seen different types of use of force and stop and search activity.

"We spoke to some members of the panel at a meeting we observed. They told us that the constabulary took their concerns seriously and acted on them. Actions have included a change of policy for Taser use (where body-worn video is now mandatory) and a request to vary the language that is used in unconscious bias training. The panel shows its intent by insisting on regular updates which verify whether the constabulary has responded to requests for changes.

"The minutes of panel meetings, including recommendations, are published on the OPCC website and members share their considerations with the communities that they represent. A recent and welcome initiative involved panel members on the police apprentice curriculum. This unique view into the use of police powers shows the constabulary's willingness to work and build relationships with those harder to reach or less trusting members of the community. It could be further enhanced with representation for some younger people."

8 Stop & Search, Use of BWV October 2017 – February 2020 - See Appendix 4 page 1.

9 Taser, Use of BWV March 2019 – February 2020 - See Appendix 4 page 3.

At the time of writing, we do not know when and in what form the SP will next meet. The next scheduled meeting is on 27th May at Police HQ.

28/03/2020 David Woodward Adeela Shafi