

SCRUTINY OF POLICE POWERS PANEL

Annual Report 2020/2021

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FOREWORD BY DAVID WOODWARD, CHAIR OF SCRUTINY OF POLICE POWERS PANEL (SOPPP)

This has been a challenging year for Avon and Somerset Police (ASP), for the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) office and for the Scrutiny Panel. However, our Panel rose to the challenge, dealing with the extra workload created by the impact of Covid, having to work remotely and with reduced resources. Nevertheless, over the last four quarters we have:



Scrutinised **231 cases**



Completed **564 cases**
feedback forms



Viewed about **84 hours**
of body worn videos (BWV)



Provided specific
feedback to the Police on
113 of the 231 cases



On behalf of the Panel, I thank the Police and the PCC for their continued support, for their willingness to consider our comments and, where appropriate, for acting upon them.

The one disappointment of the year has been the lack of progress in improving the Panel's engagement with the communities of Avon and Somerset. We hope that in twelve months' time we will be able to report significant progress in this regard.

My special thanks go to the fifteen members of the Panel, who have maintained its core value of independence of thought and deed in difficult circumstances.

THE WORK OF THE SCRUTINY OF POLICE POWERS PANEL (SOPPP)

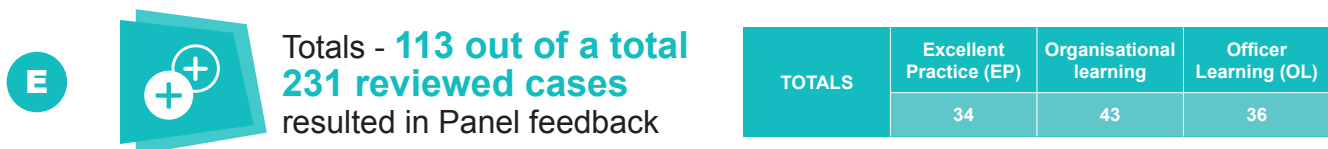
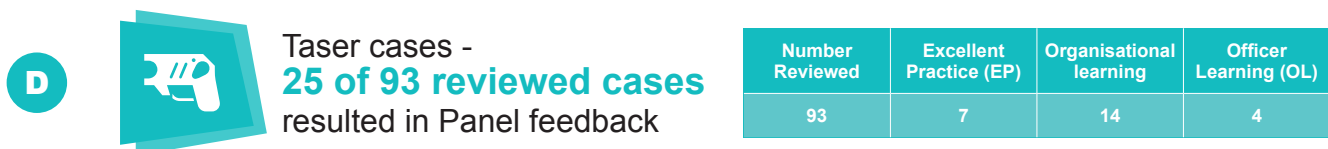
The Scrutiny Panel, comprising 15 local people, has completed its 4th year of:

- Independent scrutiny of the Police use of their powers.
- Enhancing the public's confidence in the work of Avon and Somerset Constabulary (ASC).
- Ensuring openness and transparency by ASC.
- Acting as a 'critical friend' to ASC.
- Offering feedback to ASC on their use of their powers, in particular the use of force
- Viewing about 84 hours of BWV.

FOCUS OF THE YEAR

- Discrimination/disproportionality in the use of Taser and Stop and Search
- Data quality
- Monitoring the use of BWV
- Promoting de-escalation
- Scrutinising the enforcement of Coronavirus Regulations
- Contributing to the Lammy review of Stop & Search.
- Commenting on excellent practice, asking questions and suggesting both individual and organisational learning.

OUR WORK IN NUMBERS



All of our quarterly reports can be read on the OPCC website:
www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk

SCRUTINY AND FEEDBACK

CORONAVIRUS REGULATIONS

ASP recognised from the outset the importance of securing and retaining the public's confidence in how the Police enforce these unprecedented restrictions of the public's freedom of movement and activities. From the outset, SOPPP scrutinised and provided feedback to A&S. The SOPPP produced its own guides to the Regulations to ensure the quality of the Panel's scrutiny.

With 477 Coronavirus Statutory Instruments and 7 major changes to the extent and nature of the restrictions it was difficult for officers to keep up to date and be fully informed of the detail of the Regulations. The SOPPP, whilst understanding this challenge emphasised to the ASP the importance of doing so, in order to maintain the public's confidence. Of the 58 Coronavirus cases scrutinised, 37 had specific feedback, of which 17 were 'excellent practice', 8 were 'organisational learning' and 12 were 'officer learning'.

STOP AND SEARCH

A) Lammy Review of Stop & Search

Since its inception in 2017, the SOPPP has always scrutinised disproportionality in the use of force, including Stop & Search. Since July 2020, a focus group has been exploring disproportionality in Stop & Search by ASC. The SOPPP has contributed to the work of this focus group, whose report is expected to be published in the near future. The SOPPP looks forward to being involved in implementing its recommendations.

B) IOPC Report on Metropolitan Police Stop and Search

This report, published on 28/10/2020 made 11 recommendations to improve the manner of exercising Stop Search powers. The SOPPP has taken note of these recommendations, when scrutinising Stop Search cases.

AVON AND SOMERSET CONSTABULARY'S INTERNAL SCRUTINY PANEL OF STOP SEARCH AND USE OF FORCE (ISP)

The SOPPP chair attends each of the ISP quarterly meetings, which has proved to be of mutual benefit. The ISP invites contributions from SOPPP and in turn the ISP provides insights and statistics to support our Panel's work, which makes our scrutiny more targeted and effective. The SOPPP appreciates the openness and cooperation from ISP.

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT US?

A) In September 2020, the Regional Director of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) said:

“ I was pleased to observe the Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel at work. I saw first hand the important contribution made by members of the public to view the use of powers by Avon and Somerset Police. I look forward to following the Panel’s progress and their impact on local policing practice. ”

B) In February 2021, Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services’ (HMICFRS) report on disproportionate use of police powers highlighted the SOPPP’s outstanding achievements in their scrutiny of the use of force and Stop & Search (page 42):

Positive practice: Innovation in stop and search external scrutiny

In Avon and Somerset Police, well-informed and diverse panel members view randomly selected body-worn footage and provide feedback to relevant officers, supervisors and the organisational learning team. The force publishes the minutes of meetings and their recommendations. Members are also involved in the police apprentice curriculum to help build relationships with harder to reach communities who may have less trust in the police.

Positive Practice: External Scrutiny of the use of Force

Avon and Somerset Police has a well-attended scrutiny panel with a diverse membership, offering a broad range of views. The force provides the panel with comprehensive information and data in advance of each meeting. Panel members view body-worn video footage of randomly selected incidents and then split in to smaller groups to consider them and report concerns. Learning is shared with relevant officers, supervisors and the organisational learning team. Chief Officers and other leaders attend to reinforce the importance of the meetings and drive any resulting action. The panel members are well informed and have received training to help them in their roles. They are provided with regular updates from the force on action taken. The minutes of panel meetings, including recommendations, are published on the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner website and members share their considerations with the communities they represent.

- C) Dorset PCC's Scrutiny Manager attended the SOPPP December 2020 meeting and said:

“ I found it really interesting and many thanks again to... the Chair for the invitation.

I was interested to note that the case summaries focused on topics such as Taser, S&S, UoF, Complaints and Covid related FPNs, all of which have been key areas for our independent scrutiny too! It was also reassuring to note that we are not alone in finding challenges with disproportionality and ethnicity recording of Stop & Search.

The report to the CC for the Constabulary's formal response certainly stresses the importance of being held to account. ”

- D) Chief Superintendent Deryck Rees, Head of Response, commented:



“ I am proud to be involved in the SOPP panel and I have found it to be external scrutiny of the highest quality, asking powerful questions, reviewing cases, and challenging the constabulary to get even better and continue to build trust and confidence with the communities it serves. I am grateful for the dedication of the panel and the time and the personal investment they make in supporting this vital work. I look forward to working together on this agenda. ”

E) Comments from Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Mark Shelford:

“ I am delighted to have attended the SOPP Panel in June 2021 and to see the professional working relationships with key stakeholders including the Chief Officers and Black Police Association.

“ The SOPP Panel greatly assist me in my oversight of Avon and Somerset Police and provide excellent external scrutiny including Stop and Search, Use of Force, Taser deployment and reviewing covid regulations.

“ I greatly appreciate the huge amount of time and commitment that the volunteer members give to this very important scrutiny work and the outcomes in the Panel’s reports highlight key themes and actions for the force. We are all working with the same aim; to improve the police service for local people and our communities. It is members’ hard work that greatly helps to ensure the police maintain a high quality of service to our wonderfully diverse communities.

“ Thank you to the Panel for focussing on the theme of discrimination and for being willing and able to change to new ways of working. I am very much looking forward to working with the Panel in the future as we strive together to make sure Avon and Somerset is the most efficient and effective police service for all our communities. ”

F) Superintendent Paul Wigginton, Head of Patrol said:

“ I have worked closely with the SOPPP since 2017 and, throughout this time, the panel has provided invaluable scrutiny of our use of stop and search and use of force.

The panel has expanded this work to wider exploration of themes including disproportionality, use of BWV and de-escalation. This has contributed to our learning, change in our processes and, importantly, in recognising good work and practice taking place in the force.

The panel enables openness and transparency to this important area of police work, and contributes to our continuous improvement towards our vision of providing outstanding policing for everyone.

This report provides a great overview of the work completed this year and the value added by the panel, which has rightly been recognised nationally. I look forward to our continued working with the panel and would like to thank them for their work. ”