

Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel



Quarterly Report

Panel Meeting: 18th of June 2026

Feedback Meeting: 30th of July 2026

Contents

Panel Overview	3
Message from the Chair.....	4 & 5
June Case Categories	6
June Case Reviews.....	7
Input on Exposure of Intimate Parts.....	8
Organisational Learning Tracker	9

Panel Overview

The Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel (ISoPPP) reviews the use of police powers, including Taser, Stop and Search, and other use of force, to ensure they are appropriate and proportionate. Acting as a 'critical friend' to Avon and Somerset Police on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), trained panel members review Body Worn Video (BWV) footage and police records, meeting quarterly with police and OPCC representatives to provide community-focused scrutiny.

Who are the Panel?

The Panel is composed of 17 local people from a diverse range of backgrounds. The Panel started their work in June 2017 and meet quarterly, reviewing and scrutinising a sample of files and footage on the use of police powers.

What does the Panel do?

- Independently scrutinises Avon and Somerset Police (the police) use of their powers.
- Aims to enhance the public's confidence in the work of the police.
- Ensures police openness and transparency.
- Acts as a '*critical friend*' to the police.
- Provides feedback on drafted police policy documents.
- Offers feedback, from a local person's perspective to the police on their use of police powers, particularly the use of force.
- View BWC footage of police incidents, including Stop and Search, feeding back good practice and areas for improvement.
- Observe police training.

In addition to special case reviews*, the Panel meets once each quarter to review 15 randomly selected cases and submit feedback. This feedback is collated and passed to the police. Approximately forty-two days later, the Panel reconvenes for a short follow-up session to discuss the feedback provided and to review how the police are responding to the learning identified.

**A case review is an incident/case that has gained a lot of media attention/public interest, causing public debate/questions around actions taken by the police.*





Message from the Chair

As I step down as Chair of the Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel, I do so with pride in what we have achieved and confidence in its future under Christa Christensen. Christa brings considerable insight, rigour and commitment to independent scrutiny, and I know she will build on the foundations we have established.

David Woodward's passing had a profound effect on the Panel. His vision, strategic thinking and commitment to rigorous independent oversight shaped much of what followed. When I took on the role of Chair, I felt a responsibility to remain faithful to the outcomes David had envisaged, while also developing the Panel in response to what we were learning.

In many ways, that has been the balance throughout my time as Chair: honour the foundations but continue to build.

We strengthened our Terms of Reference, introduced dedicated viewing days and developed our approach to special case reviews. This gave members greater opportunity to examine not simply whether an action was compliant, but whether it was necessary, proportionate and reasonable, and what the experience had been for the person subjected to the police power.

Our scrutiny has produced tangible learning. We have recognised good practice and written recognition letters to officers, while also identifying seven areas requiring organisational learning, including handcuffing, vehicle stops, de-escalation, communication, body-worn video, proportionality, training and adultification.

These are important wins because scrutiny should not simply identify what went wrong. It should influence what happens next.

I have always described the Panel as a critical friend. Our role is neither to defend policing nor to criticise it automatically. It is to ask difficult questions, recognise good practice and remain independent enough to challenge when something does not feel right.

I believe we have made a difference by strengthening the relationship between communities and policing, creating space for challenge and ensuring that community perspectives are brought into the examination of police powers.

But there is still much to do.

The next phase must focus on impact: connecting the question raised, the response provided, the action taken and, where possible, the evidence that change has occurred. We must continue to identify patterns across incidents and ensure that learning does not simply disappear into reports.

Most importantly, the Panel must never become a comfort function. Its legitimacy comes from its independence and its willingness to have difficult conversations.

I am grateful to every Panel member, past and present, and to those within Avon and Somerset Police and the OPCC who have engaged with our work.

As I hand over the Chair, I believe we have remained faithful to David's vision while making our own contribution to the Panel's development.

David's legacy is not simply something to remember. It is something to continue.

My time as Chair has come to an end, but my belief in the importance of independent scrutiny has not.

The work continues, and I look forward to seeing the Panel grow, challenge and learn while keeping the voices of Avon and Somerset communities at its heart.

Desmond Brown MBE

Outgoing Chair

Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel

June Case Categories

Each quarter, the Panel will identify several case categories for scrutiny focus when reviewing cases under Use of Force and Stop and Search. A full list of cases that fall under each category type are then requested from the police.

Use of Force

1. Compliant Handcuffing of members of the public during a stop and search by race and gender
2. The use of taser on Black, Asian or other racially minoritised members of the community
3. The use of baton or PAVA (Pelargonic Acid Vanillyl Amide) on members of the public over the age of 18, including race and gender overview
4. EIP searches for all ages of persons

Stop and Search

1. EIP searches for all ages of persons
2. Effected after a S163** vehicle stop by officers with grounds
3. Ethnicity and grounds for moderate-high repeated searches (person stopped 3 times or more in a 12-month period)
4. BRAG*** Tool used in relation to a use of force incident or stop search

*EIP = Exposure of Intimate parts, formally Strip Search

**[Road Traffic Act 1988 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/61)

***BRAG = Blue, Red, Amber Green risk assessment vulnerability tool. A BRAG is required for each person or people that has/have a specific vulnerability or risk. It is used to guide officers to record the most relevant information to help safeguard vulnerable people.

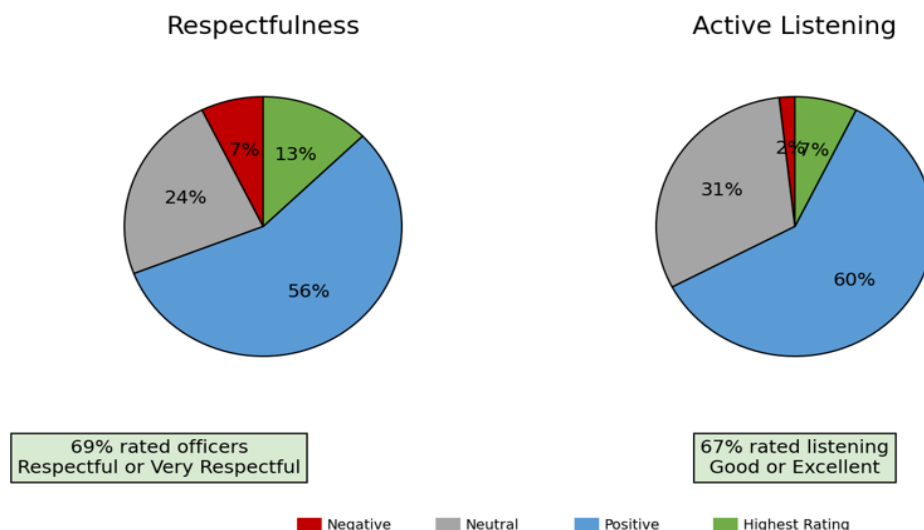
June Case Reviews

Based on the June 2026 ISoPPP review meeting, the Panel scrutinised 15 cases involving the use of force, Taser deployments, stop and search encounters, vehicle searches and intimate searches. Overall, the Panel's assessment was positive, with the vast majority of cases receiving Green or Green2 ratings, indicating that police powers were generally exercised appropriately, professionally and proportionately. Only one case received a Red rating and no cases were graded Amber2 or Red2, suggesting there were no examples of severe misconduct or systemic failure identified during this review period. The Panel also recognised a significant amount of good practice, resulting in 15 Good Work Letters being recommended for officers who demonstrated professionalism, effective communication, compassion and appropriate decision-making in challenging circumstances.

Alongside recognising good practice, the Panel identified several recurring themes for organisational learning. The most common issue related to Body Worn Video (BWV), with concerns raised about delayed activation, incomplete footage or poor positioning which reduced the Panel's ability to fully scrutinise some incidents. Additional learning themes included stop and search compliance, particularly around the quality of grounds and adherence to GOWISELY requirements; the justification and management of handcuffing; maintaining professional language and communication standards; safeguarding considerations involving children and vulnerable individuals; and operational decision-making during police encounters. As a result of these findings, six key areas of organisational learning were highlighted, two Structured Feedback Exercises were recommended, and one case was referred for internal misconduct consideration. The Panel will continue to monitor these themes and provide independent scrutiny and feedback to support public confidence, accountability and continuous improvement in the use of police powers across Avon and Somerset Police.

ISoPPP June 2026 Panel Feedback

Officer Respectfulness and Active Listening Ratings (n=55 responses)



- 69% of panel assessments rated officers as Respectful or Very Respectful.
- 67% of panel assessments rated officers' listening skills as Good or Excellent.
- Only 7% of responses identified officers as mildly disrespectful
- Just 2% of responses rated listening as poor.

Input on Exposure of Intimate Parts Searches

New Training

During the meeting, the Panel was joined by members of Avon and Somerset Police (ASP), who provided an update on the development and implementation of a new training package for Exposure of Intimate Parts (EIP) searches.

Recognising the lack of consistent or nationally accredited training for EIP searches, ASC has undertaken to develop a standardised and professionally delivered training package that establishes clear expectations and promotes a consistent operational approach across the Force.

For clarity, an Exposure of Intimate Parts (EIP) search involves the visual inspection of exposed intimate areas in accordance with relevant policy and procedures. Where necessary to facilitate the search, an individual may be asked to reposition clothing or parts of their body themselves. Officers may also inspect a person's mouth where appropriate.

Panel Feedback

Following the presentation, the Panel provided recommendations including:

- Considering the potential impact of EIP searches on girls and young women from some faith communities.
- Including information on the role and availability of an Appropriate Adult.
- Strengthening recognition of the needs of transgender and non-binary individuals.
- Clarifying guidance on the searching of hair.
- Providing further clarity on Body-Worn Video (BWV) procedures.

Members commended the quality of the training video and thanked the police for seeking external scrutiny during its development.

The Panel also took part in a consultation with ASP on additional considerations and safeguarding measures for the rare occasions when an EIP search involving a child may be required. Officers sought the Panel's views on potential approaches and safeguards to help ensure that children's welfare remains central to decision-making.

Panel members provided a range of feedback and advice, emphasising the importance of avoiding any approach that could unnecessarily criminalise children or negatively affect their perceptions of the police. The discussion also highlighted the need to maintain strong relationships with families, schools and communities, and to carefully consider the potential impact of police contact on a child's wellbeing.

Avon and Somerset Police welcomed the Panel's observations and were grateful for the opportunity to receive independent feedback. Officers advised that the discussion would be used to inform the content of the forthcoming training video and would also support ongoing policy development and enhancements to working practices in this area.

Organisational Learning Tracker

THEME/CATEGORY	SUMMARY OF ISSUE	TIMELINE OF ACTIONS	CURRENT POSITION	STATUS	TREND
BWV Adequacy	BWV often not activated early enough or incomplete.	2021; Initial concern raised 2022; Pre-Record function introduced 2023; BWV Tactical Lead Appointed 2024; Adequacy still decreasing 2026; As above	2026: New policy and new cameras planned.	 Ongoing	Improving
Compliant Handcuffing	Inconsistent understanding and use.	2021; Initial concern raised 2022; Issue flagged again 2023; Increase in incidents where compliant handcuffing used 2024; No National or local definition 2025; New definition implemented in A&S 2026; Concerns raised necessity, proportion & continuation of handcuff use	Definition published July 2025.	 Ongoing	Declining
Stop & Search Concerns	Receipts not always offered. Lack of adequacy on Grounds. Smell of Cannabis only reason for S&S. Issues around EIP - audio only should be activated. GOWISELY not always given.	2021; Initial concern raised 2022; Concerns increasing 2023; As above 2024; Start of new S&S Policy 2025; New Policy issued across A&S 2026; Most S&S encounters positive, only isolated concerns	New S&S Policy; Pronto receipts.	 Ongoing	Stable
Phone Seizure under S23	Officers sometimes searched phones unlawfully.	2024; Initial concern re-raised 2025; New S&S Policy created	Re-added to tracker 2024. New S&S Policy delivered to all officers.	 Ongoing	Resurfacing
Adultification	Number of occasions where young teens have been treated as adults - safeguarding missed.	2025; Initial concern raised 2026; continuation of identifying cases involving children where age related considerations & safeguarding could have been more explicit.	Continual monitoring into 2026, A&S more aware of this issue.	 Ongoing	Stable (with ongoing concern)
Communication/De-Escalation	Often telling someone repeatedly to calm down fuels highly emotive situations, and tone used can often be accusatory/unhelpful.	2024; Initial concern re-raised 2025; Matter addressed in PPST Training 2026; increase in professional communication, empathy & calmness	Language/Tone/De-Escalation techniques being revisited at PPST Training.	 Ongoing	Improving
S.163 - 164 Vehicle Stops	Concerns around disproportionality with vehicle stops.	2024; Initial concern raised 2025; Presentation delivered to ISoPP by ASP about ongoing work in this area to identify disproportionality 2026; Awaiting new form to be rolled out and data to be collected	Awaiting for the technology to be able to capture location and for form to be pushed out forcewide. Expected mid-late 2026.	 Ongoing	Stable
Feedback Loop	Not all feedback being shared/actioned effectively. Want an improved method of showcasing what the ISoPPP does and how the feedback is delivered.	2023; Initial concern raised 2024; Internal review conducted 2025; Internal review completed, implementation of new structure 2026; feedback process becoming more efficient & effective	December 2025 was the first way of the Panel working under the new format. Still in implementation phase.	 Ongoing	Improving
Professional Standards/Officer Language	Concerns around officer swearing during interactions. Whilst not serious misconduct, appearing repeatedly enough to monitor.	2026; Initial concerns raised	Links with item around communication/De-escalation above	 Ongoing	Stable
BRAG Tool	Concerns raised around BRAGs not being completed or completed without sufficient information.	2026; Initial concerns raised	ASP aware of issues in this area and work ongoing to improve quality and completion.	 Ongoing	Emerging



Further information about the Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel (ISoPPP)

Further information about the ISoPPP can be viewed through the following link:

[Independent Scrutiny of Police Powers Panel | OPCC for Avon and Somerset \(avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk\)](https://www.opcc.gov.uk/regions/avonandsomerset/)

Get in touch

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner

Avon and Somerset Police Headquarters

Valley Road

Portishead

Bristol

BS20 8JJ

www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk

or you can contact the office by telephone on 01278 646 188

You can find us on social media here:



[Facebook](#)



[X \(Twitter\)](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[Instagram](#)



[YouTube](#)

Diana Derrick

Scrutiny & Assurance Manager

Office of the Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner

