



Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner

Use of Force Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday 10 December 2019



Andy Taylor - AT	Independent Panel Member (<i>Chair</i>)
Steve Plant – SP	Independent Panel Member
Jane Moir - JM	Independent Panel Member
Stan Sadler – SS	Independent Panel Member & Dorset Healthcare
Supt Pete Windle – PW	Professional Standards Department
CI Stewart Dipple – SD	Chief Inspector, Alliance Operational Support Command
Emma Knipe – EK	Senior Performance Analyst, Corporate Development
PC Rich Shirley – RS	Alliance Resourcing & Development, Personal Safety Unit
Adam Harrold – AH	Director of Operations, Dorset OPCC
Yvonne Fenwick – YF	Governance & Contact Manager, Dorset OPCC
Julia Harrison - JH	PA to SMT, Dorset OPCC

Apologies

Supt Tracey Baker – TB	Dorset Territorial Police
Paul Cashmore – PC	Independent Panel Member

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, introductions were made and apologies were noted.

No declarations of interest were submitted.

The minutes and the public facing summary of the meeting held on 3 September 2019 were confirmed as a true record, subject to a minor amendment.

Performance Report

The panel reviewed the data for Quarter 2 (July - September 2019/20).

In 2019/20 there was a 2.5% increase in the number of use of force incidents recorded. The largest increase recorded had been in Bournemouth Central. Significant increases had also been recorded in North Dorset and Dorchester.

237 officers had been injured in 2019/20. In comparison to last year, completion of forms had improved and recording of minor injury had increased. Although there had been a 6% reduction in assaults on officers and a small decrease in the number of threats with weapons, there had been an increase of 30% in officers assaulted by weapons. During 2019/20, there had been a reduction in numbers of officers stating they had been spat at.

The largest number of subjects had been aged 18-34, with 35-49 being the next largest group. In 80% of all cases, force continued to be used on men and had been predominantly recorded against White British individuals.

The Panel noted the number of use of force incidents that had occurred in the custody block and had been advised that force had been necessary to process individuals and its use recorded.

It was clarified that although baton usage had increased, it would not necessarily have meant there had been a strike, sometimes it would only have been the drawing and racking of baton.

There had been a slight decrease in the use of Tasers, although more officers had been trained in their use. Taking a Taser out of the holster would be recorded as use of force.

Dip Sampling of Use of Force cases

The dip sampling had been based on five officers who had been identified as using force the most frequently, and cases of severe injury. The Panel reviewed five cases where use of force had been used and the Chair stated that, although two of the cases had been far from straightforward, and required significant force to be used, the view of the Panel had been that, overall, the use of force had been minimised and had been entirely appropriate. The Chair also stated that all officers concerned should be commended on their behaviour and their restraint in the face of significant provocation.

Theme for Dip Sampling

The Panel discussed themes for the next meeting and requested samples that had involved individuals with a disability with bladed weapons and the thematic review should involve youths.

Taser Uplift

A paper was circulated to the Panel for consideration. A question had been asked about why all officers had not carried Tasers. It had been explained that some officers had been uncomfortable with the amount of scrutiny and responsibility placed on them.

The holster of a Taser has a compression release, whereas batons and irritant sprays are not quick release weapons. The Taser covers more distance. There are times when Taser just does not work and is not appropriate. It was suggested monitoring Taser usage over a period of 12 months to see if there is a decline in its use.

The Chair expressed his view that officers should not be forced to carry a Taser, but he remained convinced of its effectiveness.

Date of next meeting

Date of the next meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, 25 February 2020 at 10.00am.