

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

30 March 2016

Dear Home Secretary

HMIC Inspection: ‘Stop and search powers 2: are the police using them effectively and fairly?’

The Chief Constable and I have already been in correspondence with you over the Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme and the HMIC findings around stop and search in their PEEL legitimacy report. I have attached that letter here for reference.

In that report HMIC recorded that Dorset Police had a good understanding of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme and had implemented measures seeking to achieve legitimate, effective stop and search activity in a manner which gains the confidence of the local public. We also explained the work that Dorset are leading on on behalf of all Minerva forces to find an IT solution for the new Police Encounters requirements on the Niche records management system.

In line with my statutory responsibilities I am writing to you now in formal response to the HMIC ‘Stop and search powers 2: are the police using them effectively and fairly?’ report from 2015. Whilst I appreciate that some time has elapsed since the publication of the report this does afford me the opportunity to provide a more considered response now that Dorset Police have had time to fully consider the report recommendations and implement any required changes.

The recommendations and associated actions arising from this report are overseen locally by the Confidence and Equality Board (CEB).

Plans to complete the required actions

The Force Recommendations Coordinator ensures that all inspection recommendations are recorded, assigned to a lead to oversee progression, and assigned to the most appropriate strategic board for oversight and governance. A matrix and RAG system progress report template is used for each HMIC inspection report, allowing for ongoing monitoring and updates on progress against specific recommendations until the Board approves sign-off as complete. Self-assessments have been completed to inform this specific action plan, overseen by the Assistant Chief Constable as chair of the Operations Board.

Dorset Police voluntarily signed up to the Best Use of Stop and Search (BUSS) scheme in August 2014 and has made significant progress in implementing it, as acknowledged in the recently published PEEL Legitimacy report. IT issues have hindered the publication of some of the required data and work remains ongoing to resolve issues with the recently implemented NICHE RMS system and the development of a new Force website due to be launched later this year. Dorset Police has published details of the BUSS via social media; this has resulted in an increase of applications to the Patrol Observer Scheme.

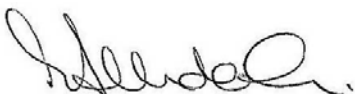
Searches involving the removal of more than an outer coat, jacket or gloves

A request for change to the NICHE system has been made through the national Minerva co-ordinating group to facilitate the recording of the required data for this recommendation. The ability to comply with this request is dependent on when the required NICHE upgrade can be run and tested in Dorset.

Some stop and search data is currently published via the Dorset Police website and the Police.UK website although the current IT issues explained above do currently limit what is available for publication. Stop and search data is routinely reported to the Community Scrutiny Panel (which includes members of the public and representation from my office) and the Confidence and Equality Board within Force. The Community Scrutiny Panel has been observed by the College of Policing, Stop Search lead officer. Dip sampling is also undertaken to identify any incorrect entries on NICHE whilst work remains ongoing to resolve the current recording limitations.

I can confirm that I have consulted with the Chief Constable in formulating this response and trust that this provides you with the necessary reassurance around action being taken locally by Dorset Police in response to the relevant HMIC report recommendations.

Yours sincerely



Martyn Underhill
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner

Annex A – Joint Letter to the Home Secretary on Best Use of Stop and Search Scheme



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3 March 2016

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
LONDON
SW1P 4DF

Dear Home Secretary

BEST USE OF STOP AND SEARCH SCHEME

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 10 February 2016 regarding the findings within Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's National Legitimacy Report around stop and search.

Dorset Police was pleased that HMIC recorded that the Force had a good understanding of the Best Use of Stop and Search scheme, and had implemented measures seeking to achieve legitimate, effective stop search activity in a manner which gains the confidence of the public of Dorset.

In Dorset, officers do record the additional range of data required by the Best Use of Stop Search Scheme and we can thus link the legal power used such as a search for an item of stolen property with the outcome of the search for example a cannabis warning. Dorset this past year made a significant change to the Niche computer system and in addition Dorset are leading for Minerva forces on a Niche re-write to enable even more detailed recording.

The new Police Encounters requirements were extensively worked on throughout 2015 in order to devise a Minerva agreed Niche solution, the specification of which has now been written by Dorset Police on behalf of 20+ forces.

Minerva consulted regularly with Jayne Pascoe at the Home Office to ensure that the Minerva specification Request for Change (RFC) complied with all requirements and recommendations. The final RFC not only addresses the requirements of Best Use of Stop and Search, but also

Chief Constable Debbie Simpson QPM

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seeks to address the relevant recommendations arising from the HMIC reports 2013/15, the APPGC report 2014 and the Annual Data Requirement for Police.uk.

The Police Encounters RFC was submitted to Niche for review and development on 29 October 2015 but was held back by Niche due to an inter-dependency with the Niche intelligence process which is also subject of substantial national change; APP Intelligence Management is changing the format of the intelligence report and associated processes under the governance of the Intelligence Innovations Working Group and is, therefore, subject of another Minerva/Niche RFC. Both the intelligence and stop and search RFC's are now with Niche for initial review and development. No timescales have been given as yet, but the Police Encounters solution will have to be built by Niche, tested/amended/tested by Dorset, before final sign off for release to all Minerva forces.

In other words, the IT solution to our dilemma could be several months away, and in many ways, is out of our control as the Lead Force driving through change. As soon as a date for the RFC changes is known, meaning compliance with your standards is achievable, we will be in contact.

In the interim, the Force is undertaking various other measures in a bid to help change culture, some examples are:

- ◆ Dorset has utilised social media to publish details on stop search activity and a recent campaign has resulted in around fifty persons applying to accompany Officers on lay observation patrol.
- ◆ The Community Scrutiny Panel allows details of stop search activity in the county to be scrutinised by the public and we have had one Community Trigger incident.
- ◆ A significant change to the external Dorset Police website is underway and the Programme Director advises that this will go live in April and subsequently Dorset will be in a position to improve its external publishing of street interventions and the Best Use of Stop Search Scheme in Dorset.

We hope that this letter goes some way to endorsing the work that Dorset Police is undertaking to achieve full compliance under the requirements of the Best Use Scheme.

Yours sincerely



Debbie Simpson
Chief Constable



Martyn Underhill
Police & Crime Commissioner

Chief Constable Debbie Simpson QPM

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